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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF STERLING  
LAMPRECHT'S THEORY OF CAUSALITY

by

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## CONTINGENCY AND FREEDOM

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## INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

The dissertation is a critique of Sterling P. Lamprecht's attempt to formulate the metaphysical foundation on which a sound naturalism must rest as expressed in his two main works, Nature and History and The Metaphysics of Naturalism. The dissertation consists of two parts. The focus of attention in Part One (Chapters I and II) is Lamprecht's view of causality where he tries to develop a non-Humean concept of causality which involves "natural necessity." Part Two (Chapters III, IV, and V) is a critical examination of Lamprecht's claim that there is contingency in nature and freedom in human action. The goals of the dissertation are to produce a more acceptable thesis of causality involving "natural necessity" and to establish the existence of contingency in nature by using Lamprecht's position and arguments as a starting point. I am using Lamprecht's work because I believe that his position, although not complete and only partially correct, is essentially in the right direction.

I will briefly introduce the topics of Part One at this point and present a separate introduction to Part Two. Chapter I consists of five sections. The first states Lamprecht's view on the nature of metaphysics. Metaphysics,

he says, is the science of existence in general which is the nature that the many, many concrete existences have in common. The method of metaphysics is the same as that of the natural sciences but the subject matter is different. Metaphysics is not the study of any particular set of causes but rather the study of the nature of cause itself. Metaphysical truths hold for all existences.

In the second section, Lamprecht's own naturalistic metaphysics is presented. He views nature as a name for the multiplicity of diverse existential things, coming into being and passing away, related to one another, now in this way and now in that, with ceaseless change and inexhaustible variety. Lamprecht emphasizes that man is within nature. He argues that his view of nature is the result of accurate empirical observation which must be the source of any sound naturalism.

In the next section, Lamprecht's criticisms of the traditional British empiricists are presented. He believes that their concept of empiricism was far too narrow and resulted in a distorted view of nature, a view which loses sight of the dynamic character of nature. Their position is a result, Lamprecht contends, of two main errors. One is an extremely narrow definition of "empirical" which, he feels, was due to their fear of reification of the abstract noun "force," and the other is a misunderstanding of the

scientific method. Lamprecht wants to demonstrate that his view of empiricism, which is much broader than the British empiricists' view, allows him to develop a more sound naturalistic metaphysics.

Among the empiricists, Lamprecht sees David Hume as his greatest enemy. Section Four is devoted to Lamprecht's attack on Hume. In particular, he argues against Hume's analysis of causality. Lamprecht distinguishes and criticizes two possible views attributed to Hume. One is that causality is nothing but a certain habit of mind, a kind of expectation, built up in human observers by the uniform sequences in nature. The second is that causality is no more than a name for the uniformity of sequence in the events of nature.

The final section of Chapter I is a detailed exposition of Lamprecht's concept of causality. This section has five parts. In Part (i), Lamprecht's case for the indefinability of "causality" is presented. He argues that no metaphysical trait, i.e., "causality," can be formally defined since they are ultimate traits of existence. Part (ii) contains his argument for the direct perception of causality. Lamprecht contends, contrary to the Humeans, that we can directly perceive causal efficacy in many instances and can legitimately infer it in other instances. In the third part, Lamprecht's concepts of "agent" and

"patient" are introduced. He uses these concepts to explain his view of causality. An agent is a specific entity that is displaying one or more of its powers by acting on a patient which is a specific entity that is displaying one or more of its capacities to undergo some change. Although agent and patient are distinct parts of every causal situation, each particular is both agent and patient at the same time. In every causal situation, each individual is both demonstrating its powers to act in some manner and displaying its capacities for change in some other manner. Part (iv) is an exposition of Lamprecht's view of lawfulness. He argues that every change has three factors, the agent, the patient, and the pattern of change. If a certain type of agent acts in a certain manner upon a certain type of patient, when certain conditions prevail, then, a certain pattern of change will ensue and can be predicted with assurance. It is this aspect of change that Lamprecht feels scientists have emphasized in formulating their laws. He argues that this sort of generalized knowledge is not the goal for naturalistic metaphysics. The last part of this section contains Lamprecht's argument for the existence of physical necessity in nature. His argument is based on the analysis of causality presented earlier, (i.e. by the use of the concepts of "agent" and "patient.") Lamprecht grants the empiricists

that there is no logical necessity in nature but he insists that there is a physical necessity that corresponds to our ordinary everyday use of that term. Every time an agent acts in a specific way on a patient there follows a necessary result unless some new agent or patient interferes with the process.

Chapter II will be a critique of Lamprecht's arguments against the Humean position of causality. Although he is not very successful in his attacks on the Humean thesis, I believe that the seeds of a sound view of causality exist in Lamprecht's position. This chapter will elaborate Lamprecht's case for natural necessity while attempting to destroy those parts of the Humean position that Lamprecht fails to demonstrate are incorrect. In developing a solid view of causality I will draw on the works of Dr. Edward Madden.

In order to examine the adequacy of Lamprecht's two criticisms of Hume, I found it necessary to present a systematic view of Hume in order to put the criticisms in perspective. I will demonstrate that his criticisms of Hume are incomplete and miss the mark because he apparently did not understand the basic Humean argument. In addition, I will show that there are two different interpretations of Hume which Lamprecht does not distinguish in his interpretations. Lamprecht's first criticism which is an attack

on the view that causality is nothing but a habit of mind will be shown to be completely irrelevant because no one, including Hume, has held such a view. Lamprecht's criticism against the view that causality is but a name for constant conjunction, a view that is held by many Humeans, is a good one. It consists in pointing out that not all regularities count as causal in nature - that there is a crucial difference between accidental and summative universals on the one hand, and lawful or counter-factual sustaining universals, on the other. Although Lamprecht is correct in attacking the attempt to define "cause" as "constant conjunction," I will show that his criticism does not capture the full error of such a position. In addition to its incompleteness, I will demonstrate that his criticism of the view that causality is but a name for constant conjunction never reaches the core of the positivistic interpretation of Hume, which is that there cannot be, In-principle, a causal necessity between events. Lamprecht absolutely never looks at or criticizes the so called "In-principle" argument given by Hume which is the heart of the positivistic thesis. If there were a necessary connection between any cause C and its effect E, then the conjunction of  $C \wedge \neg E$  would be self-contradictory. But it is not self-contradictory, argues Hume, since it is possible for nature to change its course.

Lamprecht's view of causality is in the right direction, but his analysis and arguments are too embryonic. I agree fully with Lamprecht when he argues that "causality" cannot be defined. Although we can't define "causality," I will show that we can give an analysis of it. I also agree that we can directly perceive causality. Lamprecht does not establish this point, it will be shown, because he fails to deal with the positivistic argument that there is no causality in the external world to be perceived.

I try to extend Lamprecht's analysis of causality and establish a sound view of natural necessity while at the same time destroying the Humean In-principle argument. I show that there is grounds for saying that  $C \sim E$  is self-contradictory by elaborating on what we mean by the "nature" of a particular. In addition, I demonstrate that Hume's error was due in part to the ambiguity of the sub-phrase "a change in the course of nature." Finally, I try to show that we can directly perceive causality in ~~nature~~. a characteristic of all events, always and everywhere, while each branch of science studies traits of a particular kind. A metaphysician will leave to natural scientists the determination of what specific causes are at any one time operating, and will stick instead to analyze the nature of causality; he will leave to the scientist the determination of what particular materials

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## CHAPTER I

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Professor Lamprecht considers himself a naturalist.

His special concern is the formulation of the metaphysical foundation on which a sound naturalism must rest. For Lamprecht, naturalism is the metaphysical theory which maintains that everything that exists comes into being, endures for a time, and then passes away because of the interactions of the forceful things of the natural world.

It is the function of metaphysics, he says, to give us generalized statements of the basic traits of existence. He insists that the method of metaphysics is the same as that of the natural sciences but that the subject matter of metaphysics is different than that of science. The subject matter of metaphysics is those traits that are characteristic of all events, always and everywhere, while each branch of science studies traits of a particular kind. A metaphysician will leave to natural scientists the determination of what specific causes are at any one time operating, and will seek instead to analyze the nature of causality; he will leave to the scientist the determination of what particular materials

are needed for the manufacture of certain desired metals or salts, and will seek instead to state the nature of matter, etc. Metaphysical principles, if correctly worked out, will apply to any and every thing that exists.<sup>1</sup>

There is a certain body of knowledge which examines existence as existence and whatever belongs to existence merely because it is existence. It is not identical with any of the sciences which take up, now this, now that - each thing, as it were, in turn. For none of the other bodies of knowledge inspects existence as existence or in its generic nature. Rather, each of the other bodies of knowledge cuts off some portion of existence in order to see what specific character that portion of existence chances to have. But since we are seeking the principles or generic traits of existence, we clearly must attend to that in every existence which is requisite for any existence whatsoever to exist at all.<sup>2</sup>

Lamprecht says that there are many erroneous concepts of the nature of metaphysics. Metaphysics is not an attempt to formulate a cosmology. Cosmologies, like Anaximander's and Whitehead's, are helpful in making a synthesis of the many things man has come to know but these pictures that are formed are not of nature. They are pictures of certain stages in the growth of human knowledge. "A cosmology is

*John  
100 Books*

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<sup>1</sup>Sterling P. Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

a map; and like a map, it is bound to be a picture of some areas but not of other areas, much less of all areas.<sup>3</sup> A cosmology tries to serve both the function of the natural sciences by being concrete and particular and the function of metaphysics by being general and all inclusive. Unfortunately, Lamprecht says, in the end it turns out to be a distortion of both.<sup>4</sup>

Metaphysics is concerned with the natural world and does not and cannot go beyond this world. It does not claim or seek to establish that there is any reality beyond nature that somehow explains the natural world. Metaphysics does not talk about nature as a whole as if nature were something different than the mass of particulars with their relations and their processes. The principles of metaphysics are statements, Lamprecht contends, not of what nature contains, but of how it behaves.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.

Lamprecht next explains his own naturalistic metaphysics. He suggests that it is really incorrect to refer to nature as "it" because nature is merely a name for the undifferentiated potential.

<sup>3</sup> Sterling P. Lamprecht, Nature and History (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1950), p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, pp. 28-30.

multiplicity of diverse existential things with their ceaseless changing and inexhaustible variety. It is a mistake to define nature in terms of any of the many sorts of things which come about in its historic development.

It is not a vegetable nor an animal, though both animals and vegetables occur in its course. It is not a machine nor a mechanism, though it contains mechanisms and machines.... It is not a system, though it contains many systems, solar, economic, physiological, political.... It is not mind, though it flowers at times into beings who feel, imagine, and think. It is not a substance, nor a quality, nor a relation, though many substances, qualities, and relations may be discovered within it.<sup>6</sup>

Nature is the locus and condition, the occasion and context, of every particular we may happen to notice or choose to mention. "Nature is more than all the determinate matters of fact which we could mention in any list however ingeniously exhaustive."<sup>7</sup> In addition, Lamprecht states that there is no reason to suppose that the particular things we have discovered, numerous as they are, are a full measure of nature's capacities. Nature includes not merely all actual matters of fact, but the manifold and plural potentialities of all these actual things. Many philosophers, he says, have been so caught by the

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<sup>6</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

immediate and insistent presence of the actual in our  
 experience that they have overlooked potentiality in  
 formulating their theories and thus speak of nature as a  
 finished collection of elements.<sup>8</sup> A requisite for any  
 sound view of nature is a recognition of the vast amount  
 of potentiality in any and every actuality. Nature is a  
 reservoir of many more potentialities than can ever  
 become actual because any actuality means certain poten-  
 tialities have been eliminated. In addition, the future  
 is full of as yet unrealized potential.<sup>8</sup>

Lamprecht's view of nature emphasizes that in no way  
 is man outside of nature. We have nature within which  
 there are men, along with many other things. Men are as  
 much a part of nature as dogs and fruits and planets.<sup>9</sup>  
 It may be useful for certain purposes and studies (in law,  
 psychology and religion) to set man aside from other  
 natural entities as one would set aside an apple tree for  
 study concerning its special attributes, but in no case  
 does this imply that the man or tree are really outside of  
 nature. The fact that man is a knowing animal with a mind  
 does not put him outside of nature.

<sup>10</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, p. 94

<sup>8</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, op. cit., Chapter 13; Nature and History, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

Nature in man is nature brought to a special form of fulfillment in which are displayed distinctive manners of which the rest of nature is not actually capable. We need to study sticks and stones, in order by contrast to appreciate man. We need also to study man, in order with thoroughness to appreciate nature. Only through both lines of study can we avoid, on the one hand, an anthropomorphic romanticism about nature, and, on the other hand, an insensitive materialism about man.<sup>10</sup>

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## 3.

Lamprecht sees the traditional British empiricists as the main enemy of the concept of metaphysics and view of nature just discussed.<sup>11</sup> It is unfortunate, he says, that the school of empiricism whose original intent "... was to provide a technique for the criticism of all prior philosophical systems and start a program for a fresh and more unprejudiced report of the facts on which any adequate reflection about the world ought to be based"<sup>12</sup> should formulate one more system which has come to have its own primary assumptions, established doctrines and internal dialectic. It became one more attempt by philosophers to impose their own closed system on nature. It was twice

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<sup>10</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, p. 94.

<sup>11</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, pp. 34-35.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

the crime because they did so under the banner of "empiricism."

Lamprecht contends that there are two main sources of error that cause the British empiricists to develop a distorted view of nature. One is an extremely narrow definition of "empirical" and the other is a misunderstanding of the scientific method.

Lamprecht gives credit to the empiricists for the job they did initially to clear philosophy of peculiar entities, but he feels that they went too far with their asceticism. In their eagerness to avoid any reification of abstract terms, members of the British Empiricist School have been blind to the dynamic character of nature's occurrences.<sup>13</sup> "It would be one thing to suppose," Lamprecht says, "...that 'force' is a more than natural or more than empirical entity"<sup>14</sup> which makes winds bend trees, makes waves crash against the cliffs along the shore, and makes the rain fall forcefully upon the ground. He claims that this way of talking proceeds by the fallacy of reification but Lamprecht insists that it is quite another thing to point out that winds press forcefully

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

upon trees, that waves crash forcefully against the cliffs, and that rain falls forcefully upon the ground.<sup>15</sup> Force is an abstract noun, and forcefully is an adverb. "Both are legitimate words to use in making a metaphysical analysis, though both, like all words, must be used," Lamprecht cautions, "...with discrimination and in justice to the facts discovered."<sup>16</sup> There is nothing wrong, he says, when a metaphysician says that he finds force in nature, when he means forceful objects at work. The fact that the empiricists recoil from that statement because it may be misinterpreted appears a bit immature to Lamprecht. Every statement may be misinterpreted. We all seem capable, he says, of using abstract nouns correctly most of the time.

Lamprecht says the British empiricists are not afraid to assert that they find regularity and sequence ~~they~~ in the world. Certainly they do not find regularity or a sequence in the sense in which they find a tree or a wave. Lamprecht makes the point that it is all right to say regularity and sequence are found in nature when we mean that the particulars of nature "...manifest a behavior which can be spoken of as occurring regularly and

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

sequentially."<sup>17</sup> He is driving home the point that the British empiricists have an exaggerated fear of the use of the word "force." In the same way as we speak of trees and waves behaving regularly and sequentially, we can speak of trees and waves behaving forcefully. In other words, Lamprecht says there are regularity and sequence and force in the natural order of empirically observable events' "...and force is no more dangerous a word than regularity and sequence."<sup>18</sup> Lamprecht concludes that the British Empiricist School lacks the ability to handle language correctly and insists that "...their linguistic limitations ought not to set bounds to the formulation of metaphysical truths."<sup>19</sup>

Some empiricists have so feared turning the abstract noun "causality" into an other-than-natural entity that they have rejected causality altogether in any sense in which a metaphysician is interested in it. These empiricists, out of fear of reification, decline to note the adverbially specifiable way in which things behave. We empirically observe that things behave forcefully in a reciprocal sort of way upon one another. The saw cuts forcefully

insis Lamprecht

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

through the tree and the tree's forceful resistance dulls the teeth of the saw.

In addition to their fear of reification, Lamprecht claims that the British Empiricists School did not properly understand the nature of the scientific method. This misunderstanding worsened their already extreme asceticism. Scientific analysis is selective.

Science always chooses some phase or aspect of the existing world for detailed examination, and so selects, for its data, certain qualities or relations which are to be found in the welter of cosmic events.<sup>20</sup>

Science selects but it does not deny the existence of the complex world from which the selection is made. This is something the empiricists apparently did not understand. In addition to being selective, science is interested in "...translating cosmic events so far as possible into formulae of functional correlations and mathematical equations."<sup>21</sup> Science is concerned, Lamprecht claims, with what Aristotle called the formal cause and is mostly unconcerned with what he calls efficient causes, and "...Aristotle's formal cause is not a cause at all," insists Lamprecht, "...but an essence, or form or

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 140

universal."<sup>22</sup> The language of scientific generalizations misses the point completely in any analysis of causality. Causality both when observed and when inferred is located not in masses of events taken collectively but in each of the many events taken singly. Causal relation for Lamprecht is between concrete objects and events but not between classes of such objects and events. Statements about such classes are generalizations of a number of causal relations each of which is causal in its own right.

We have to resist, Lamprecht says, any attempts by philosophers who would deny certain natural features of our complex world just because they are not reflected in the selective formulae of science. There are many different types of analysis that one can make of nature. No scientific or philosophical analysis, Lamprecht says, can exhaustively list and describe all of the aspects of events. "The unnoticed is not the non-existent, especially when it is merely unnoticed by one human enterprise and fully recognized in the more ordinary affairs of life."<sup>23</sup> Members of the school of empiricists have denuded their world of too many things, taking their own range of per-

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. In the Human Obs causality is necessary connection between chief object and effect.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Impression in the mind is of a uniform type of sequence. Impression is of 'a determination of the mind' to pass from the perception of an object to the idea of that object's real attendanc. That is, ...we directly experience causality only in ourselves;

ceptions as setting bounds to the possibilities of nature.

## 4.

Lamprecht specifically attacks David Hume whom he holds responsible for many of the mistakes in the British Empiricist position. In particular he distinguishes and criticizes two possible views attributed to Hume. One is that causality is nothing but a certain habit of mind, a kind of expectation, built up in human observers by the uniform sequences in nature. The second is that causality is no more than a name for the uniformity of sequence in the events of nature.

The historical Hume, Lamprecht says, sought to know why we think causes necessary and how we think causes necessary and how experience gives rise to the idea of necessity. Hume believed all ideas arise from antecedent impressions.

The impression from which the idea of causality (necessary connection between facts) comes is the chief object of his search. He finds it not in the 'external' world, objects we call cause and effect but in 'a new impression in the mind' which arises after experience has given us many instances of a uniform type of sequence. This impression is of 'a determination of the mind' to pass from the perception of an object to the idea of that object's usual attendant. That is, ...we directly experience causality only in ourselves;

as legitimate our idea of causality is derived from the operations of our own mind, and of all habits the application of the idea to other events is hazardous. <sup>24</sup>

The result of this analysis is a skepticism about the existence of causality in the world. Causality does not designate a character of the events in the world around us, whether these events be explosions, physical impacts, human attitudes, or surgical operations. All we know and can know is constant conjunction.

Lamprecht offers the following argument against the above position that causality is nothing but a habit of mind. If habits, he says, are built up by uniform sequences in nature, there is at least some operating cause back of habit. In saying that under certain circumstances expectations arise in the mind of the observer of events, we mean that there are causes operating to produce habits in men that would justify the perhaps habitual expectations of the psychologist who has adequate knowledge of human nature. Lamprecht argues that there is a causal relation between the way a man thinks and some other particulars of man's internal world or the external world. It is this causal relation that justifies the expectations of the psychologists. In addition, he asserts, it is just

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

as legitimate to inquire about the causal connection back  
 of all habits.<sup>25</sup>

If the cook expects the lighting of her fire to be followed by a sufficiently hot oven to bake her bread, she is none the less dealing with a situation in which objectively real connections justify her expectations. The Swiss villager would not delay a landslide by sitting still and forming different expectations; rather his habits are built under genuine compulsion.<sup>26</sup>

Causality is not a category restricted to psychology although a psychologist may and does find causal connections operating to produce human habits, ideas, belief, volitions, etc. Causality is a metaphysical trait of natural events and is used significantly by physicists, merchants, and athletes as well as by psychologists. Furthermore, causal factors operate with or without the presence of human beings. Lamprecht concludes then that Hume's "psychological" analysis of causality is just not adequate.

In addition, Lamprecht suggests, not only are we not confined to the operation of our own mind for "impressions" of causal connection, but also we detect causal connections less quickly and less easily in ourselves than in things

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 134-35.

outside us. he tank caused the automobile to move. It is from the urgency of events about us, from the way things bang and bump and push and press and clash, that we get our first experience of causality and derive our first idea of causal necessity.... But instead of going from the physical thrusts of things ... we begin with the experience of causality in bodily thrusts and only later extend the notion to our mental life (and the degree to which such extension is legitimate is still to some philosophers an open question).<sup>27</sup>

The second view attributed to Hume that Lamprecht attacks is that causality is merely a name for the uniformity of sequence in the events of nature. It is simply not true, he asserts, that causality is constant conjunction. Constant conjunction may be taken as indicative of causal connection, though it is not always such. Causality is more than constant conjunction is the position defended by Lamprecht. He offers the following example to show what is wrong with the Humean position.

We are accustomed to saying not merely that the exploding of gasoline in the cylinders causes the automobile to move down the street, but also that the absence of gasoline in the tank causes the automobile to stop moving.<sup>28</sup>

Lamprecht contends that it is incorrect to say that the

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

lack of gasoline in the tank caused the automobile to stop moving. There is, he says, "...strictly no causal connection between the absence of something and the failure of an event to happen."<sup>29</sup>

It is obvious, Lamprecht says, that the lack of gasoline is as uniform an antecedent of the cessation of motion as the proper supply of gasoline is an antecedent of motion. In addition, the method by which we establish the presence of a causal connection in events may be the same as the method which we use to establish "the 'non-causal' connection between withdrawal of a cause and the non-occurrence of an effect."<sup>30</sup> Lamprecht concludes from the above example that uniformity of sequence is not enough to establish the presence of a causal connection between events because there are uniformities that are not causal. Doubtless, Lamprecht contends, "...there are causal connections in all events;"<sup>31</sup> and examination of the event of the car stopping will show that "...the friction of the moving car with the surrounding air and the road down which it was proceeding caused the car to come

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Ling F. Lamprecht, "Of a Curious Reluctance to Recognize Causal Efficacy," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, Whole no. 232 (July, 1930), p. 408.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

to a stop."<sup>32</sup> The point is, Lamprecht insists, that we can surely distinguish between uniformities that are causal and those that are not.

Lamprecht's point is that causality is "more than" constant conjunction. He attacks C. J. Ducasse on the same point. Ducasse claims that the definition of "cause" is "the only change occurring immediately before and contiguous to the place of the second."<sup>33</sup> According to his definition, Ducasse holds that the running out of gasoline is the cause of the car stopping. He says it would be quite correct to say that (given that the conditions under which the car was moving remain otherwise the same) the disappearance of gasoline which constitutes a change in those conditions does cause the car to stop. Lamprecht makes clear that he feels Ducasse's definition of cause, like Hume's, is a method of discovery and does not exhaust the character of the causal connection. Lamprecht does not disagree that a causal connection really and objectively is what Ducasse says but he believes also that it is more. The cause is more than temporally near

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Sterling P. Lamprecht, "Of a Curious Reluctance to Recognize Causal Efficacy," The Philosophical Review, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4, Whole no. 232 (July, 1930), p. 408.

and spatially contiguous to the effect. There is, claims Lamprecht, an integral process going on that has the character of being a coercive, compelling, producing, efficacious drive. "Cause and effect do more than succeed each other; they are changes of the existences in the causal situation between which there is dynamic or forceful pressure."<sup>34</sup>

shows It is not the exhaustion of gasoline that causes the automobile to come to a stop. Rather it is the operation of friction or active mutual pressure of roadway and tires on each other that causes cessation of motion. Lamprecht says that the friction was not merely a "condition," as Ducasse assumes. It is present both when the automobile continues to move at uniform speed and also when the automobile slows down and finally stops. It was a cause all the time. It was always having its special effect on the motion of the car. Lamprecht's contention is that only existences can be causes. And we cannot legitimately say that the disappearance of anything exists. If it does not exist, it can hardly be causally operative. "Exploding-gasoline and resisting-pavements and brake-linings and

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<sup>34</sup> C. J. Ducasse, "Of the Spurious Connection," *The Philosophical Review*, Whole no. 7 (July, 1930), p. 392.

shoving-men are existences and produce effects."<sup>35</sup> The thrust of his attack on Hume and Ducasse is their neglect of the coercive character of causal efficacy and for taking "causality" to be wholly defined as a kind of correlation between changes that can be expressed in a formula.

We are now ready to examine Lamprecht's own view of causality, and will present it in five parts. The first shows why "causality" is undefinable, and the second seeks to demonstrate that causality, although undefinable, can be directly perceived in some cases and legitimately inferred in others. The third is a more detailed exposition of the causal relation as Lamprecht sees it by introducing his notions of agent and patient. An agent is a particular that is displaying one or more of its powers by acting upon a patient which is also a particular that is displaying some one or more of its capacities to undergo some change. Part four is a discussion of the concept of lawfulness and in part five a case is made for natural necessity. His argument for natural necessity is based on the analysis of causality given in the first four parts.

(i) Lamprecht claims that "causality" because it

<sup>35</sup> C. J. Ducasse, "Of the Spurious Mystery in Causal Connections," The Philosophical Review, Vol. XXXIX, no. 4, Whole no. 232 (July, 1930), p. 399.

denotes an ultimate character of reality is undefinable. That is, we cannot give a formal definition for it because, like space and time and color and sound, it is irreducible to anything more basic. It is a brute trait of existence. We can only get a denotative feeling for causality.

Lamprecht holds that this inability to define causality satisfactorily is one of the reasons that causality though dealt with constantly in all other affairs of life is frequently denied or "explained away" in philosophic discourse.<sup>36</sup> But, he contends that the indefinability of a term does not distress an empiricist in his sense. Empiricism does not mean that one must formally define every term we use. It is only when we can neither define our term nor point to the subject matter the term stands for that we are probably engaged in sheer nonsense. That is, though we cannot define causality we can analyze it. We can talk about the term and give examples showing what we mean by causality,<sup>37</sup> as we will see in Part Three when we give Lamprecht's analysis of causality using the concepts of agent and patient.

(ii) Unlike the Humeans, Lamprecht feels that we

<sup>36</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, p. 132.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

can directly perceive causality and legitimately infer it in other cases. He feels that everyday experience is enough to justify this belief. He does not point to the workings of the mind as evidence for the direct perception of causality. Lamprecht's evidence is the experience of causality in the "external" world.<sup>38</sup> He insists that there is no need to limit the meaning of experience to a succession of private "psychical states" as do the Humeans.<sup>39</sup> Lamprecht's starting point obviously is quite different than Hume's. Lamprecht accepts our experience to be directly of the external world.<sup>40</sup> His whole argument for the direct perception of causality is our everyday experience. When a farmer sees the wind forcing the trees to sway or the unfortunate villager sees the moving hot lava burn and bury his cattle, the causality in nature is surely directly presented.

Lamprecht claims not only that we can directly perceive causality but that we can legitimately infer it in other cases. We legitimately infer, he says, a causal connection between the points of light in the heavens and

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>40</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, p. 30.

the spots in our photographic plate, or between the medicine we swallow and the health we recover. We know what we mean in inferring causality, even when our inference goes beyond the range of the immediately observed.

He says we mean the same kind of compelling drive, though on quite a different scale, which we do directly observe in the operation of many agents.<sup>41</sup>

(iii) Lamprecht uses the concepts of "agent" and "patient" in giving his most detailed analysis of the causal relation. There is, he says, in any and all changes three factors that are always present. The agent, the patient, and the pattern of change. Change is not mere succession but it is also transformation, reconstruction, alteration: it is efficacious operation by something upon something. These somethings are individual things which he calls agents and patients depending on their role in any individual change.<sup>42</sup> An agent is a specific entity that is displaying one or more of its powers by acting on a patient which is a specific entity that is displaying some one or more of its capacities to undergo some change. He believes all specific entities of nature have powers (i.e.

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<sup>41</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, p. 130.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

a wind-blowing has the power to sway things) and capacities (i.e. water has the capacity to boil at 100° C). The prepositions, by and upon, are important. The preposition "by" points to the active agent. The preposition "upon" points to the receptive patient. Everything is both agent and patient all the time. For example, the power saw is the agent when it cuts the tree which in this case is the patient. But at the same time the resistance of the tree is having an effect on the saw, the teeth of the saw eventually become dull. The point is that agent and patient are not two different kinds of things, like males and females. A person who is a male is not a female but a thing that is an agent may also be, in fact always is, a patient. Likewise, a patient is also always an agent. A power saw is an agent when it is cutting the tree. It is not a patient when it is cutting the tree but it is a patient when its teeth are being dulled by the tree. Both these events (tree-cutting and teeth-dulling) are going on at once but in each happening we can distinguish the role of agent and the role of patient.<sup>43</sup>

In describing the causal relation between agent and patient, Lamprecht does not see it as the result of three distinct entities, things, events (actual process of these

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

things), and force (that which makes things into events). Force is neither a non-empirical entity inside of things nor a real agency behind events. Empirically we have forceful things (agents and patients). "Thinghood" (or the structure that an empirical existence has at any moment) and "eventness" (or its character as process through a temporal stretch) are entirely distinct concepts, but they do not stand for two separate particulars. It would, he says, be "...ontologically wrong to suppose that particulars first exist merely in their thinghood and then somehow give rise to occurrences or events;"<sup>44</sup> likewise it would, Lamprecht thinks, "...be ontologically wrong to suppose that eventness is a kind of *materia prima* which then crystallizes mysteriously and gives rise to things."<sup>45</sup> Thing and event mean different aspects of empirical existence; they denote the same existences. There is no thing he says, that is not an event, and there is no event that is not a thing. "What we empirically find," he claims, "...are happening-things or things-that-are-going-on."<sup>46</sup> It is these changing things or changes-of-things that are this by

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<sup>44</sup> Lamprecht, The Philosophical Review, p. 409.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

causes and effects.

(iv) The third factor mentioned in every change, the pattern of change, brings us to a discussion of the concept of lawfulness. Lamprecht feels that scientists have emphasized and used this aspect of change in formulating their laws. "If a certain type of agent acts in a certain manner upon a certain type of patient when certain conditions prevail, then, ...a certain pattern of change will ensue and can be predicted with assurance."<sup>47</sup>

Lamprecht does not question the soundness of the contention that changes occur in the course of nature in accord with so-called laws which men can often discover and state with considerable accuracy. There is plenty of scientific evidence for this contention. Scientific knowledge is often generalized knowledge. Lamprecht contends that science's interest in generalized knowledge makes the scientists deliberately overlook the particularities of the materials and of the tools of investigation, because the "...formula of regularity of sequence, and only that formula, is, for the time being, of major interest."<sup>48</sup> This type of knowledge increases man's ability to control

<sup>47</sup> *Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism*, p. 120.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

and utilize nature's powers. Lamprecht is in no way suggesting that man give up the pursuit for knowledge of this kind but he does want to point out that there are other types of things to know.

For instance, the above type of knowledge is not the goal for naturalistic metaphysics. It is true, Lamprecht says, that the laws of nature can best be expressed in the form of the hypothetical proposition "If A, then B." The course of nature is full of "if's." These laws of nature are descriptions, Lamprecht contends, of a pattern that will occur if agents of a certain kind act, in a certain way, on patients of a certain kind. They are not predictions, he insists, that agents will in fact act this way. They are not prescriptions. These laws enable us to say that the outcome of certain initiations of action is inevitable. (Unless, of course, some other agent interferes with the process in such a way as to modify, or annul or redirect it.)<sup>49</sup>

There is no doubt, Lamprecht says, that one can inquire into the kind of agent which is acting and into the kind of patient which is being acted upon. This is exactly what science does. However, the result is a loss for metaphysics because we are no longer dealing with an actual

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

event "...that can be dated and placed after some other, simultaneous with others, and before still others."<sup>50</sup> We are rather, he claims, taking both agent and patient out of the existential world and putting them into the universe of discourse of scientific analysis. Metaphysics is the direct examination of "...a particular occasion in its full particularity."<sup>51</sup> The more one generalizes, Lamprecht claims, the more one loses particularity. Both meticulous search into the rich particularity of a chosen event and careful effort to reach sound generalizations are important kinds of investigation for Lamprecht but they ought never be confused with each other. Agents operate upon patients, and in the consequent process of change there are disclosed uniformities of vast practical and theoretical import. He stresses that these laws of nature are not agents at all. They are not causes and never bring events to pass. They are inert; though, our ideas about them may be potent agents in the course of events.

(v) Lamprecht's concept of natural necessity is, in a sense, a conclusion of the previous sections. He feels that he has defeated the Humean arguments against natural

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

necessity and believes his own analysis of causality to be a solid basis for such a view. He agrees with the empiricists when they argue that logical necessity holds between or among propositions, not among things. The school of British empiricism did a service in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by "...pointing out that the relation between premise and conclusion in logic is not the same as that between antecedent and consequent in nature."<sup>52</sup> Their argument was very relevant and effective against the rationalists of their time. Necessity, Lamprecht agrees, "...in the sense in which one may speak of a necessary conclusion from a set of premises, is not found anywhere in natural events."<sup>53</sup> The deductive method relies on noting such necessity and therefore is not suited for revealing the course of existential things and events. There are many different logical systems of possible worlds that can be constructed by using logic but there is only one actual world. The system of nature, he says, cannot be known in the same way as these logically constructed worlds. "It must come to be known, if indeed, it is ever known, or insofar as it is known, by observation and experiment."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

Lamprecht admits that deductions may be useful in extending the range of accepted knowledge by enabling us to formulate hypotheses about further things still unknown, but it is only by checking these hypotheses empirically that we can assess their worth.

Although Lamprecht agrees with the above analysis of logical necessity, he still feels there is another sense of necessity that is applicable to the course of events. There is, in common parlance, he contends, another sense of necessity in which necessity is constantly found in nature. This sense of necessity is consistent with Lamprecht's analysis of causality. The falling tree (agent) crushes the blade of grass (patient). The grass cannot resist the tree's impact. The force of the falling tree makes the blades bend and lie prone. Although we cannot formally define it, we can directly perceive this compulsion according to Lamprecht. In addition, there is compulsion of that kind throughout nature. This compulsion lies in the powers of the particular agents and the capacities of the particular patients. Scientific laws reflect this compulsion.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to our experience of necessity in nature, Lamprecht cites the occurrence of the term in ordinary

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

language. One is entitled in philosophical discussions, Lamprecht asserts, to use terms in accord with an established parlance, and therefore, one may say that the blade of grass necessarily bends before a compelling natural force, or that there is necessity in nature.<sup>56</sup>

The British Empiricists (including Hume) may reject the use of the word "necessity" here and another word may be used but no one has the right to reject the facts indicated by a certain language because they do not themselves choose to use that language. And claims Lamprecht, this is exactly what the British empiricists have done. The denial of necessity in nature is more than an objection to certain linguistic usage. The outcome is that the school of British Empiricists completely distort nature's productivity. ~~Humean view of causality~~

In all of Lamprecht's arguments he relies strongly on common sense experience and ordinary language usage. The result is that he starts out with very different epistemological assumptions.

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<sup>56</sup> Lamprecht asserts that we can directly experience Ibid., p. 111.

CHAPTER II

CRITICISMS AND EXTENSIONS OF  
LAMPRECHT'S POSITION

In this chapter, we turn to a critical examination of Lamprecht's criticisms of Hume and his own alternative view of causality. I will claim that his criticisms of the Humean position are incomplete and miss the mark and that while his own position is sound in many ways his analysis and arguments are too embryonic. Later in this chapter, I will elaborate Lamprecht's view and add arguments which may successfully defeat the Humean thesis. To help achieve this goal, I make use of the work of Dr. Edward Madden. The aim of my criticisms is to develop a sound non-Humean view of causality.

1.

In all of Lamprecht's arguments he relies strongly on common sense experience and ordinary language usage. The result is that he starts out with very different epistemic assumptions than Hume. It is his belief, and mine, that these epistemic assumptions are more adequate. According to our everyday experience, he contends, it is simply false that we only experience qualities of sensations. Lamprecht asserts that we can directly experience

objects and events. All of this follows from his philosophy of naturalism. Man is in nature and is in direct contact with natural entities. There is no leap from sensations to objects that must be justified. He agrees with Hume that we cannot know more than what we experience but experience is not restricted to what goes on in one's own head. Lamprecht feels Hume's skepticism to be completely unjustified. We can and do know the external world exists. It seems clear that a great deal, but not all, of Hume's skepticism was derived from his erroneous epistemic assumptions that the only things we are directly aware of are our own sensations. Hume's analysis of experience seems much more suspect than the common everyday analysis of experience offered by Lamprecht. It seems clear that we are never presented with a quality except of some object.

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Before we examine the adequacy of Lamprecht's two criticisms of Hume, it is necessary to present a systematic view of Hume in order to put the criticisms in perspective. There are two basic parts to the Humean position, the first one of which is based on Hume's atomistic epistemic assumptions. He believed our "mind" contains "impressions" and "ideas." The impressions are intended to be the immediately

given data of sense and of introspection, while the ideas are the images of memory and imagination.<sup>at</sup> A single impression is merely a quality of sensation. On this view, the perception of physical objects is synthetic in nature - constructed associationistically out of sensations. Given these assumptions, it is clearly impossible for any single external impression or internal impression of the influence of the will to be the origin of any relational concept. Therefore, no single impression can be the origin of the idea of causal power. In addition, Hume asserts that reason alone can never give rise to the idea of causal power or necessary connection. All empirical concepts are complete in themselves and never entail that any other event will or must result from them. There is no object which implies the existence of any other.<sup>sure the</sup>

Given his assumptions which seemed epistemically correct to him, Hume finds that he cannot account for the idea of causal power that we do have through experience or reason.<sup>un</sup> So he accounts for this idea of causal power instead through the repeated experiences of certain objects or events always occurring together. This Hume calls "constant conjunction." The concept of constant conjunction provides the key to why we think we experience some events as necessarily connected. When events of type A

David Hume, A Treatise of Human Understanding (New York: Everyman's Library, 1904).

have been constantly observed without fail to be cojoined with events of type B, a habitual association is set up in the imagination so that whenever we observe a new A, the idea of a B arises in the mind with an overwhelming force, this force being itself an introspectively observable feeling. This feeling of force we now project into the world, and we imagine a "force" or "power" as pushing and pulling events or objects in the world. This is how the concept of causal power is attained.<sup>57</sup>

From the above thesis, two different conclusions about what Hume meant can and have been drawn and attributed to him. The first interpretation can be called epistemic skepticism. According to this position, constant conjunction is all we perceive of the causal relation, not that this constitutes the ontological nature of the relation. This position rejects the principle that "nothing exists but experience" but concludes that what "cause" might denote beyond constant conjunction must forever remain unknown. Although we ordinarily mean "necessary connection" when we use the concept of causation, and believe that such a connection has ontological status, neither the definition nor the belief can be justified by

<sup>57</sup> David Hume, A Treatise of Human Understanding (New York: Everyman's Library, 1964).

reason or experience. And yet, Hume has said, just as one believes in the existence of the external world by instinct, so nature has seen fit to set up within one's thought processes a habit or custom which impels one to accept causation as necessary. The reasonings concerning cause and effect thus are "more properly an art of the sensitive than of the cognitive part of our nature." And though reason is unequal to the task of proving that the external world exists and that there are necessary connections between objects and events, still it is equally incapable of proving these things impossible. This, plus the fact that the instinct which compels us to believe these things is useful, shows that it would be very foolish to believe otherwise.

The second interpretation which can be drawn from the epistemic argument is that there are no necessary connections in nature, and that cause means the same as constant conjunction. We cannot find any necessary connections between matters of fact because they are not there. This position can be called the positivistic view of causality. This is the way the general philosophical community understands Hume but not the way he is understood by historical scholars. Contemporary Humeans use the notion of "law" which involves antecedent and consequent summative universals and lawful or counter-

to explain causality but don't use cause to mean constant conjunction.

## 3.

Lamprecht's criticisms of Hume are incomplete and miss the mark because he apparently did not understand the basic Humean argument. In addition, Lamprecht does not distinguish in his criticisms between the two different interpretations of Hume.

His first criticism which is an attack on the view that causality is nothing but a habit of mind is completely irrelevant because no one, including Hume, has held such a view. Lamprecht has missed the whole reason why Hume brings in the habit of mind thesis. Hume resorts to the habit of mind thesis because he cannot account for the experience of causality any other way. The thrust of his argument is not that causality is a certain habit of the mind but that the way the mind works leads us to believe that there is necessary connection between events.

Lamprecht's criticism against the view that causality is but a name for constant conjunction, a view that is held by many Humeans, is a good one. It consists in pointing out that not all regularities count as causal in nature - that there is a crucial difference between accidental and summative universals on the one hand, and lawful or counter-

factual sustaining universald, on the other.

Lamprecht points out that the lack of gasoline is as uniform an antecedent of motion as the proper supply of gasoline is an antecedent of motion but the former is not a cause while the latter is. Constant conjunction does not allow us to distinguish between a legitimate causal relation and an accident. The fact that causality is more than constant conjunction is the core of his criticism. It is a point that he applies equally well in his argument with C. J. Ducasse who defines "cause" as "The only change occurring immediately before and contiguous to the place of the second." Hume and Ducasse neglect the coercive character of causal efficacy and mistakenly take "causality" to be wholly defined as a kind of correlation between changes that can be expressed in a formulae.

Although Lamprecht is correct in attacking the ~~den~~ attempt to define "cause" as "constant conjunction," his criticism does not capture the full error of such a position. The real error of such a definition is the failure of Hume and Ducasse to distinguish between the meaning of a sentence and the supporting reason or evidential grounds for that sentence. Hume and Ducasse do not have similar views of causality but here they make the same mistake. To the question, "Is ~~x~~ the cause of y?" it is meaningful

relevant, even though the answer is not conclusive, to or reply "yes, since x & y in varied situations always occur together." Occurring together in varied situations is a reason for asserting that x is the cause of y, part of its evidential ground. However, if, as the strict Humean insists, "cause" means "constant conjunction" or as Ducasse insists "cause" means "the only change occurring immediately before and contiguous to the place of the second," then it is no longer possible to give either as a reason for asserting x is the cause of y. If "brother" is defined as "male sibling" and I say "Steve is her brother," then I have not helped in the least by adding, when challenged to back up this claim, "because Steve is her male sibling." But clearly we do depend, both in ordinary and technical discourse, upon de facto correlations as a reason for asserting that x is the cause of y, or as partial evidential ground for such a claim. Indeed, such correlations, in the absence of any counter evidence of a different sort, would count as a sufficient reason for asserting a causal proposition. Hence it seems that a strict Humean or Ducasse type definition of "cause" is simply a confusion between saying something and giving a reason for it.<sup>not</sup>

We would never think of substituting "constant conjunction" for "cause" in a sentence and supposing the

his hands. The point

is nothing in the

meaning remained the same, or of using the one instead of the other. If we meant by "cause" exactly the same as "de facto correlation," we would certainly use the latter ~~term~~ because it is a far less controversial notion.

Although Lamprecht's criticism of the view that causality is but a name for constant conjunction is relevant and good, he never attends to the core of the positivistic interpretation of Hume which is that there cannot be, In principle, a causal necessity between events. He absolutely never looks at or criticizes the so called "In-principle" argument given by Hume which is the heart of the positivistic thesis. If there were a necessary connection between any cause C and its effect E, then the conjunction of  $C \sim E$  would be self-contradictory. That is, if there were a necessary connection between C & E, then every time C occurred E must occur too. Yet the conjunction between  $C \sim E$  is perfectly consistent for the positivistic Humeans, since there is nothing self-contradictory about the concept of a change in the course of nature. We believe that cutting off a man's head causes him to die. It would indeed be startling if a man lived after we cut his head off; but nevertheless it is not impossible. Nature might alter its course in such a way as to allow man to somehow live while carrying his head in his hands. The point is that there is nothing in the

concept of cutting off someone's head that necessarily implies that he must die. It is possible to have C ~ E. Therefore, there is no necessity in nature. We will attempt our own answer to the Humean In-principle argument later.

## 4.

Lamprecht's view of causality is in the right direction, but his analysis and arguments are too embryonic. In addition to filling out his position where necessary, I will try to remove the final obstacles to a sound view of causality involving natural necessity.

(i) I agree fully with Lamprecht when he argues that causality cannot be defined. Causality like color, space, time and sound, is irreducible to anything more basic. It is a brute trait of existence. Since it is not a complex property like "brother" (which can be broken down to "male sibling"), we cannot give it a formal definition but it can be given an ostensive definition. We can point to what we mean by causality. In addition we can analyze it. Lamprecht does not make this point clear although he does give a reasonably good analysis of causality in his discussion of agents and patients. He talks about causality in terms of an agent's power to do things and a patient's capacities to undergo certain transformations when specific agents act upon them. He makes us understand what he means by

causality even though he cannot formally define it. I agree with Lamprecht when he says it is only when we can neither define our terms nor point to the subject-matter the terms stand for, that we are probably engaged in sheer nonsense. This is obviously not the case here. I would also emphasize the fact that we can give an analysis of causality that makes sense in addition to the mere pointing that Lamprecht mentions. ~~but not ful developed analval~~

(ii) Although I agree that we can directly perceive causality, Lamprecht does not demonstrate this because he fails completely to deal with the positivistic argument that there is no causality in the external world to be perceived. They hold that since  $C \sim E$  is not self-contradictory there is no causal necessity in the world. It is possible for water to boil at  $100^\circ C$  today and next week to boil at  $200^\circ C$  because they claim nature can change its course. If there were any real necessity in the world, this could not happen. They do not deny that we seem to experience causal necessity in our consciousness but resort to Hume's explanation of that experience. We have that experience due to a certain habit of the mind and not because we experience causality in the activity of nature. The conclusion is that there is no physical necessity to be directly aware of and that the appearance that there is can be explained away satisfactorily by a Humean. Lamprecht

never attacks this position and therefore he never defeats it. He does not establish that our experience of causality reflects an actual necessity in the world. Hence, all his arguments for the direct perception of causality are wasted.<sup>17</sup> They cannot be applied until the Humean position is fully defeated which I will try to do later.

(iii) Lamprecht's use of the concepts of agent and patient produce a sound but not fully developed analysis of causality. Lamprecht avoids reification of the abstract term "cause." Causal necessity is not a force or power that has existence of its own but refers to forceful objects (agents and patients) at work. It is exactly the relationship between particular agents with certain powers and particular patients with certain capacities in an existing situation. The falling tree (agent) crushes the blade of grass (patient). The grass cannot resist the tree's impact. The force of the falling tree makes the blades bend and lie prone.

The seeds of a strong argument are present in Lamprecht's thesis, but they are never properly nurtured. I want to extend his analysis and establish a sound view of natural necessity while at the same time destroy the Humean In-principle argument. In order to accomplish this goal, we must elaborate on what we mean by the "nature" of a particular (agent or patient) and the rela-

tionship of this nature to the particular's powers and capacities. This endeavor is best served by examining the concept of a physical system. The exploding gasoline (agent), we would say, has the power to move the pistons (patient), thus overcoming the drag of friction, and move the car, just as friction has the counter power to stop the car when the gasoline supply runs out and the pistons no longer move. The chemical structure, or nature, of gasoline, in turn, explains the explosive power of gasoline. Likewise we would say, correctly, that the atmosphere has the power to raise a balloon, raise water in a pump, raise the mercury column in a barometer, and crumple non-spherical containers; and here it would be the nature of the atmosphere - its having weight and exerting pressure - that would explain its power to bring about the results it does. The nature of the atmosphere itself, in turn, would be explained by gravitational attraction.

"Power" tells the story of the agent while "capacities" tell the story of the patient. Together they tell the whole story about particulars. And the nature of a particular, along with conditions and occasions, helps explain the powers as well as the capacities of particulars. Water has the capacity to be pushed up a pump, leaves have the capacity to sway in the wind, sugar the

capacity to dissolve in water, etc., and the physical and chemical make-up of these substances help explain their capacities just as much as the nature of the atmosphere helps to explain its powers.

The relationship between the nature of a particular and the powers and capacities this nature helps to explain is not a contingent one in the sense that particulars could lose all their powers and capacities, or special sets of them, and still be said to remain the same particulars. A liquid that had a gasoline smell but did not explode when ignited would not count as gasoline any more, since a host of interrelated concepts and explanations would break down. The claim that atmospheric pressure failed to raise water in a pump, given the appropriate conditions, but nevertheless that air has weight and the atmospheric blanket remains is simply self-inconsistent. To talk about the nature of a particular remaining the same even though P loses the powers and capacities this nature helps explain is to assert and deny at once that P has nature N. It is not impossible for P to act and react differently at  $t_1$  and  $t_0$ , but it is impossible for it to do so incompatibly with its own nature and still remain the same particular. There is, in short, a natural necessity between what a thing is and what it is capable of doing and undergoing.

While there is a causal necessity between the nature

of P and the powers and capacities of P, it is also true that there is nothing self-contradictory about the notion of a change in the nature of P. There are basically two different ways that P's nature might be altered. First it might change in a way such that its identity is not questioned because this change takes place in a theoretical structure which explains it. ~~the~~ Yeast may ~~lose its effectiveness over a period of time, litmus paper will not retain its capacity to turn red in an acid base forever, and a person forgets many skills learned early in life; yet the yeast, litmus paper and person do not thereby lose their identities.~~ They still count as continuous P's, since such changes in powers and capacities are explained, in part at least, by theoretical concepts which provide the invariant nature of x which continues constant throughout the change. This theory, however, presupposes certain P's which do not themselves change since such changes could not be further explained. A change in these P's constitutes the second type of change which would be a fundamental change in nature. These unchanging P's constitute an explanatory frame of reference (S), and there is nothing self-contradictory about the notion of a change in their natures since no actual or possible S's entail the falsity of each other. Though there is a necessity corresponding to the nature of the actual, this necessity does not imply that

the actual is itself necessary in the sense that its denial is self-contradictory. Though some things happen of necessity within S, it simply happens to be the case that S rather than some other logical alternative in fact constitutes the nature of our universe.

The above analysis of causal necessity can be used to destroy the In-principle thesis of the Humeans. The argument, it will be recalled, is this: "If there were a necessary connection between C & E, then the conjunction of C & ~E would be self-contradictory, but clearly this conjunction is perfectly consistent, since there is nothing self-contradictory about the concept of a change in the course of nature. Hence there is no necessary connection between C & E." However, it follows from the above analysis that the conjunction of C & ~E is self-inconsistent even though there is nothing self-contradictory about the concept of a change in the course of nature where this phrase means "a fundamental change in the nature of a particular." There is something self-inconsistent in the conjunction of C & ~E unless one puts double quotes around C to indicate that while "C" & ~E is not self-contradictory the notion of x as C of E has been relinquished. If "C" & ~E occurred either "C" was mistakenly identified or there was a change in the nature of x and it is no longer the particular that counts as C. It would be self-inconsistent

to say that  $x$  has nature  $y$  which helps explain the occurrence of  $E$ , and hence is part of  $C$  of  $E$ , and yet  $x$  still has nature  $y$  when  $C$  occurs without  $E$ . This, in effect, says that  $x$  at once both has and does not have nature  $y$ . The great error of the Humean is to think mistakenly that ' $C \cdot \sim E$  is never self-contradictory' entails ' $C \cdot \sim E$  is never self-contradictory.' Or, putting the matter in a truer light he never sees the ambiguity of the phrase "change in the course of nature" and so erroneously thinks that because it is possible for nature to change at all it is impossible for there to be necessary connections between matters of fact.

In addition Hume's error seems due to his confusion about two senses of necessity. The "strong" sense of necessity is logical necessity, by which we intend an expression which holds true in all possible worlds. That  $x$  is either  $T$  or  $F$  must be the case no matter what universe of discourse gives factual meanings to ' $x$ ' and ' $F$ '. The weak sense of necessity is natural necessity, by which we intend a proposition about natural kinds which does not have to hold true in all possible worlds, but which, if it does hold true in the given universe, yields certain conclusions. It is correct to say that factual propositions are never logically necessary but it does not follow from this that there are no necessary connections between

matters of fact. That a change in the course of nature is always logically possible establishes only the first, quite obvious fact, it does not establish the second. The appearance that it does stems from the fact that "a change in the course of nature" is ambiguous as mentioned above and may mean either " $C \cdot \sim E$  is never self-contradictory" or " $\sim C \cdot \sim E$  is never self-contradictory."

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causal necessity in the world that the issue of whether it can be directly perceived or not can be decided. With the Humean objections out of the way, we can now reassert the belief that we do directly perceive causal power. We always felt in our everyday experience that this was true but Hume's criticisms raised legitimate doubts about the reality of that experience. The problem for us in this section is to give an accurate analysis or account of this "perception" of causal power. Do we see all causal power at work? If not, what kind of causal power do we perceive? Where do we first perceive causal power? In ourselves or in the external world?

If you answer "the former" to the last question you fall into the "inferential predicament." The inferential predicament arises by taking volitional contexts as the

only ones in which causal power is directly perceived, and then projecting such experienced power onto objects and events in order to make sense of causal necessities in the physical world. This usually leads into pan-psychism and animism which is investing the physical world with all sorts of weird entities such as a world soul,<sup>57</sup> absolute mind, spirits, etc.<sup>58</sup> This is considered an absolute disaster by contemporary philosophers.

Peter Alexander in his article "Are Causal Laws Purely General?"<sup>58</sup> assumes that we can start with human agency and still escape the charge of anthropomorphism. It seems perfectly possible to him that we may acquire a concept in situations involving human agency and at the same time see that it can be applied to situations not involving human agency. Not all the circumstances of the original learning situation need be part of the concept acquired; a paradigm, he says, need not give the meaning of an expression but may just exhibit one of the situations to which it is properly applied. In moving something himself, Alexander claims, he could acquire the concept of making something move. He also points out that human agents are also patients. People are pushed and pulled by

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<sup>58</sup> Peter Alexander and Peter Downing, "Are Causal Laws Purely General?", The Aristotelean Booklet; Galley (ON. Vol. A 25).

other people and inanimate objects. The fact that he is a person is irrelevant when a wave knocks him over.

directly I am no better than a pebble.... In seeing what I am doing I also see what inanimate objects can do. Generalization sets in, and with it the recognition that human agency is inessential.<sup>59</sup>

Alexander does not solve the predicament but only assumes that the predicament is not that bad and does not lead to anthropomorphism. He apparently does not see that he is still making a leap from human agency to the relation of external things in the world. It seems to make perfectly good sense to him but the question still remains, How does he justify his so called "generalization"? Certainly human agency may not be analyzable in the same way as the causal action of inanimate things. He may be right to say that people can acquire the concept of "making things move" from "my making something move;" but do we have the right to make that jump. Hume himself believed we acquire the concept of causal necessity from the working of the mind, yet his account does not establish the fact of causal necessity in the world.

It is obvious that the inferential predicament has difficulties we would like to avoid if we could. The fact is that there does not appear to be any legitimate reason acting upon particular patients.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander and Downing, ibid., p. 8.

to assume we are directly aware of causal power only in volitional situations. In fact, we can experience directly the causal powers in the external world. Lamprecht makes a good case for this point.

...[I]nstead of going from the psychical facts of volition to the physical thrusts of things (so that belief in causality would be a kind of lingering animistic interpretation of the material world), we begin with the experience of causality in bodily thrusts and only later extend this notion to our mental life (and the degree to which such extension is legitimate is still to some philosophers an open question).<sup>60</sup>

His analysis also accounts for our belief and experience that some causal power in the world is directly perceived (i.e., an avalanche destroying a village) while other causal power (i.e., atmospheric pressure) is legitimately inferred. This real distinction in our experience becomes completely eliminated if we take as primary only human agency because then all statements about causal powers in the external world become inferences. This is certainly not consistent with the evidence of our experience. It seems legitimate once the Humean objections are removed to believe that we do directly perceive causal powers in the world. We perceive it in the work of particular agents acting upon particular patients.

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<sup>60</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, p. 136.

## INTRODUCTION

critically examine Lampecht's claim that there is contingency and human freedom in nature as well as the type of causal necessity developed in the previous chapters. Chapter III presents Lampecht's case for contingency in nature as well as his arguments for the existence of human freedom. He contends that contingency is a lack of causal agency in the coming together of two or more lines of

### PART TWO

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varied capacities of the particular patients. It is the above two qualities of nature that accounts for its contingency.

Lampecht's arguments against the determinists, who hold that there is no contingency in nature, are also presented in this chapter. He feels that determinism is an untenable position for any real naturalism because the view needs the support of a supernatural being to make plausible. Only a supernatural being with omnipotent power,

## INTRODUCTION

In the next two chapters I will present and then critically examine Lamprecht's claim that there is contingency and human freedom in nature as well as the type of causal necessity developed in the previous chapters.

Chapter III presents Lamprecht's case for contingency in nature as well as his arguments for the existence of human freedom. He contends that contingency is a lack of causal agency in the coming together of two or more lines of development in nature's occurrences. In addition to this quality of events of being accidentally related, nature is contingent in the second sense that each actual situation has many different potentialities for the future due to the varied capacities of the particular patients. It is the above two qualities of nature that accounts for its contingency.

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he argues, could make nature's apparent accidental quality determined. Since the existence of such a supernatural being has no empirical support, Lamprecht concludes that a naturalist cannot hold such a view. Therefore, no real naturalist can or should be a determinist.

Lamprecht offers a different argument for those naturalistic determinists who refuse to believe that their case presupposes the existence of a supernatural being. The view that the past determines the future distorts the true nature of the efficient cause which Lamprecht holds is the key to nature's contingency. The efficient cause is always present action by some actual individual. The determinist emphasis on the past as cause is a fatal mistake and results in the erroneous conclusion that there is no contingency in nature.

The determinist's claim that they have taken contingency into account is examined and found to be largely unsubstantiated. The determinists have only granted that nature as a whole is contingent. They admit there are other possible worlds that could have existed but they insist that there is only one actual world and everything in this world is determined. In other words, there is no contingency in nature.

The third section of Chapter III is an exposition of due to the varied capacities of the specific patients in

Lamprecht's argument for human freedom. He holds that man has some measure of freedom of action because nature has a measure of genuine contingency. Man, because he is rational, has the possibility for choice since nature has many different potentialities. Choice is that commitment in human action which eventuates from reflective judgment about an end to be sought. Freedom, for Lamprecht, is action done with a moral purpose.

In Chapter IV we will critically evaluate Lamprecht's arguments against the deterministic position that there is neither genuine contingency in nature nor real freedom in human action. I will show that Lamprecht's arguments are not sufficient to rebut the determinists and establish the presence of contingency in nature.<sup>1</sup> The determinist position, contrary to Lamprecht's claim, does not need the support of a supernatural being. This argument of Lamprecht's will be shown to be irrelevant. Lamprecht's other argument, i.e., that the determinists distort the nature of efficient cause is correct, but this argument does not establish that the intersection of causal patterns is accidental. The fact is that Lamprecht never establishes this latter point. It will be demonstrated that Lamprecht's second sense of contingency, which is that any actual situation has many different potentialities for the future due to the varied capacities of the specific patients in

that situation, has no weight unless Lamprecht can establish that the intersection of causal patterns is accidental.

I will also show in Chapter IV that there is another sense of contingency that is open to a philosopher with Lamprecht's views of causality as developed by us earlier. It is the Humean insight that nature may change its course, though only in one of the two senses blurred together by Humeans. In addition to presenting this sense of contingency, I will try to salvage Lamprecht's view of contingency by presenting arguments against some of the assumptions the determinists make.

In the last section of the chapter it will be claimed that Lamprecht's case for freedom in human action is hopelessly inadequate. His whole analysis of freedom is much too simple and misses the core of the determinist's thesis. Lamprecht mistakenly assumes that the existence of contingency in nature (which he never proves) along with man's ability to reason is sufficient to establish that man has some measure of genuine freedom in his action. In order to establish the existence of human freedom, it may be necessary to show that there is contingency in nature but it is not sufficient to establish that point. Lamprecht does not do justice to the complexity of the problem. He does not offer an in-depth analysis of the

relationships between man's reason and his inner desires, man's inner world and his actions. He ignores all questions of causality when it comes to desires, wishes, ideas, judgments, choices, etc.

Chapter V, which will conclude Part Two, will be a rudimentary attempt to advance the discussion of the problem of freedom beyond the limits of Lamprecht's analysis.

SUN VALLEY  
NO FREEDOM

and toward one another. He  
causal situation as an  
example:

A former neighbor of mine went out into the woods on his farm the first morning of deer season a few years ago. He is an excellent shot with a rifle, as I had had occasion to observe frequently. He sighted a buck at an angle, started him, and shot. And quite by chance he failed to hit his quarry. He advanced slowly and carefully along the line of his shot. And he found a small twig of a shrub which had been freshly broken so that the upper part of the twig dangled loosely down. He concluded that his bullet had broken the twig as the twig swayed in the breeze, and that the bullet had been deflected by colliding with the twig from the course. It would have taken otherwise my friend of course could not prove that his interpretation of the event was correct, and much less could I.

### CHAPTER III

The point of the LAMPRECHT'S POSITION ON CONTINGENCY AND FREEDOM intruded into the course.

This factor, claims Lam

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Causal Contingency, Lamprecht asserts, is neither a substance nor an event. It is a kind of relationship or, better, a kind of non-relationship in which certain factors in every causal situation stand toward one another. He gives the following concrete causal situation as an example.

A former neighbor of mine went out into the woods on his farm the first morning of deer season a few years ago. He is an excellent shot with a rifle, as I had had occasion to observe frequently. He sighted a buck just after sunrise, aimed and shot his rifle with confidence, and then saw the buck gallop off quite unharmed. Puzzled by his failure to hit his quarry, he advanced slowly and carefully along the line of his shot. And he found a small twig of a shrub which had been freshly broken so that the upper part of the twig dangled loosely down. He concluded that his bullet had broken the twig as the twig swayed in the breeze, and that the bullet had been deflected by collision with the twig from the course it would have taken otherwise. My friend of course could not prove that his interpretation of the event was correct, and much less could I. But I think his interpretation a highly plausible one. And in any

~~sequence~~ case his interpretation is in accord with what hunters have experienced now ~~in all~~ and then across the years.<sup>61</sup>

The point of the example is that an unexpected factor had intruded into the course of a carefully planned event. This factor, claims Lamprecht, though having important causal consequences in the issue of the event, was not in any way causally related to other factors in the situation until it intruded with sudden efficacy. Lamprecht believes that it is correct to talk about independent causally continuous sequences. He says that the hunter's intent, his sighting of the buck, his aiming and firing of his rifle, and the swift flight of the bullet from the gun is one sequence. There was also another sequence in the movements of the buck through the woods. Those two sequences, he claims, were brought together by the intent of the hunter to shoot the buck. But there was a third causally continuous sequence in the atmospheric conditions, the blowing of the breeze, and the swaying of the twig in the breeze. This third sequence, he argues, was quite independent of the other two sequences. Lamprecht's position is that the ~~rechte~~ intersection of the third sequence with the other two ~~on~~

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<sup>61</sup> ~~Sterling P. Lamprecht, Contingency in Nature,~~ ~~more~~  
Paper delivered at Philosophy Colloquium of the State University of New York at Buffalo, April 11, 1969.

sequences was completely accidental.<sup>1</sup> There was nothing in either or all of these sequences which compelled them to intersect. In other words, he says, there is contingency in events. This contingency occurs along with and not instead of the causality in nature's events. The causal development in each factor was independent of the other factors until the intrusion of the factors into one another actually occurred. Once the particulars met, they had marked effects on one another. But Lamprecht insists that one has no right to read back the future interdependence of the factors into their earlier history. The fact that particulars have met and have had effects on each other does not prove that these particulars met out of any necessity.

Contingency is a lack of causal agency in the coming together of two or more lines of development in the maze of nature's many occurrences. It is an absence, not a presence. It is not something which can be isolated for investigation because to isolate it, Lamprecht says, would be to have nothing before one for investigation. Lamprecht is saying that there is nothing in the causal situation that demands any individual be at a particular place at a specific time. It is a matter of accident that two or more particulars intersect. This quality of events of being

accidentally related is nature's contingency, as the presence of causally efficacious forces is nature's coercive necessity.<sup>62</sup>

The following is a more elaborate example that he gives to expand on his point.

One of the most intricate organized objects ever invented by men was the so-called "Apollo-8" which ... made the first manned flight from earth to a series of orbits around the moon. Thousands and thousands of parts, and of parts within parts, were involved in the preparations for the astronaut's flight. But the preparations stretched far beyond the rocket and the capsule. The control room at Houston, Texas, the launching pad at Cape Kennedy, Florida, the gravitational forces of both the earth and the moon, the heat and cold in the vast spaces between earth and moon, long months of technical scientific training and also of sensitive psychological training, - all these factors and many more which only specialists in astronautics could begin to list were involved in the organized effort. The actual flight of the capsule was the major feature of concern and interest; but the whole area of earth, moon, and intervening space was really part of the organized object with which the scientists were concerned. Fortunately, nothing happened to interfere with the successful completion of the flight. But with all the care taken to eliminate dangers, there was a haunting possibility of disaster at many points. A meteorite

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<sup>62</sup> Lamprecht, ibid., p. 9.

might have come hazardously near to the capsule, might even have crashed into it. Any one of ~~the~~ thousands of parts of the machinery might have broken down, as indeed, happened fatally a few months earlier when three astronauts were incinerated in a fire from which escape was impossible. Just as there is, ontologically, no isolation from ~~shows~~ the possibility of the intrusion of contingent factors into the most carefully planned situation, so there also is, ontologically, no such plenitude ~~Impinges~~ of contingent factors in nature as to make intrusion of such a factor ~~as did actual~~ regular occurrence in all events.<sup>63</sup>

The metaphysical point Lamprecht claims to make in the above illustration is that even when a carefully planned event succeeds and the actualizing of it encounters no accidental mishaps, the existential situation still has its contingent factor. There is contingency in each and every event because the absence of intruding factors is just as contingent as their presence. The existential world is not a vast integrated machine where each factor has its proper place and proper role. Rather, it is a very pluralistic lot of miscellaneous things, some of which are causally related, and others which are, at least for a time and provisionally, quite independent. Contingent factors are not distributed through the universe in some kind of regular pattern. He calls the

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.

chance intrusion of some factor a positive contingency and the absence of an intruding factor a case of negative contingency. Neither is planned. Neither is brought about by causally responsible forces. And even when a situation shows positive contingency, it surely shows negative contingency at the same time. For an intruding factor, indeed dozens of them, might well have impinged on the situation simultaneously; and if but one did actually impinge and thus be a case of positive contingency, the other or others, being contingently absent, are then cases of negative contingency. Therefore, Lamprecht concludes that contingency is a metaphysical principle. It is present, either in a positive or negative fashion, in all events.

In addition to the contingency discussed above, Lamprecht claims there is another sense in which nature has contingency. Any actual (present) situation has many different potentialities for the future due to the varied capacities of the particular patients. A patient can respond in a multitude of ways depending on its nature and the nature of the agent acting upon it. A wooden wall will react differently to a leaf blowing against it than it would to a bullet from a high powered rifle or than it would from a fire bomb exploding on it. It is this potentiality of the patient to respond in different ways and the

chance occurrence of any agent at a particular time and place that accounts, Lamprecht says, for the contingency in nature.<sup>64</sup>

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Now we turn to Lamprecht's arguments against the determinists, who hold that there is no contingency in nature. First I will briefly state the position that he is attacking and then give Lamprecht's criticisms of the determinist's thesis.

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The determinist thinks of the structure of the world at any given time as the inevitable result of its prior structure, and that prior structure as the inevitable result of what lay behind it, and so in infinitum.

But if I now ask why the world and all its larger or smaller parts are ~~as~~ <sup>now</sup> ~~world~~ just this moment just what they are, the answer comes to mind: Because the ~~evidence to~~ <sup>determinists</sup> world, the moment before, was precisely what it then was. Given ~~determinists~~ exactly what went before, the world, it seems, could now be none other ~~as positions~~ than it is. And what it was a moment before, in all its larger and minuter parts, was the consequences of what had gone just before then, and so on, back to the very beginning of the world, if it had a beginning, or through an infinite past time, in case it had not. In any case, the world as it now is, and every part of it, and every detail of every part,

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<sup>64</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, p. 149.

would seem to be the only world that now could be, given just the existence. <sup>65</sup>

Lamprecht feels the most persuasive form of determinism rests upon a certain type of religious piety that is not open to naturalists. The position is that God foresees plans, and brings to pass everything that occurs in the world he created. Not simply are all laws of nature established by divine power, but all dispositions and arrangements of existing concrete materials are set up by his providential will. They are commands which set up a particular distribution pattern of existential materials. Such ordered situations are "necessary" in the sense that they follow from God's irresistible power. <sup>66</sup>

Lamprecht's reply to this belief is that it can neither be proved nor disproved but naturalists would probably unanimously assert a total lack of evidence to support it. He feels naturalists who are determinists cannot and would not use God to justify their positions. Yet, Lamprecht thinks they need such a force to support their position. The logic of determinism may not require the creator of orthodox theologies, but it does require

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<sup>call</sup> <sup>65</sup> Richard Taylor, Metaphysics (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 34.

<sup>66</sup> Lamprecht, Contingency in Nature, p. 4. <sup>p. 154.</sup>

some agency, conscious or unconscious, whereby to explain the existence of just the materials of which at each ~~stics~~ successive stage of cosmic history the natural order consists. Therefore, he concludes no naturalist can or should be a determinist. Real naturalists have no cosmic agent to use to account for that particular distribution of materials and forces which prevails at any time in the world's history. The complete body of natural laws, not only of those laws that are now known, but also of those further laws that, now unknown, are theoretically knowable, cannot issue injunctions to the materials that constitute the realm of nature. They are neither an agent nor an efficient cause. The fact is, Lamprecht insists, that ~~not~~ there is nothing in nature that can make accidental togetherness determined.<sup>67</sup>

For those determinists who still believe that the past produces (determines) the future even without the use of supernatural beings, Lamprecht offers a different argument. These determinists fail to see the contingency in the world, he says, because their emphasis on the past keeps them ignorant of the nature of efficient cause. As we have seen above, the efficient cause, or what Lamprecht calls agent, is the contingent factor in nature. The

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<sup>67</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, p. 154.

determinist's view, that lumps of matter in the past to cause the future, fails to account for the characteristics of the efficient cause that represent the contingency in nature. The crucial characteristics of the efficient cause is that it is always present action by some concrete individual. In addition to missing the contingency in the world, the very nature of change itself is distorted by the view that the past determines the future because change cannot be properly analyzed, Lamprecht claims, without a sound understanding of efficient cause.<sup>68</sup>

Efficient cause, Lamprecht says, is always a case of present action exclusively. It is only the present that contains potentiality. The past is actuality and does not have any potential. History does not reveal real potentialities but only imaginary ones. The past no longer contains efficacy. The present, contrary to the determinists, is, after all, metaphysically privileged. It is central; past and future are only because they are past and future of the present. Agencies are only in the present. If, therefore, in the deterministic scheme, the present is allowed to fade into obscurity, the efficient cause is overlooked, the contingent factor is neglected and only the material cause and the final cause, both of

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<sup>68</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, p. 119.

them sources of necessity, are left for determinists to speculate about in their abstract universe of discourse.<sup>69</sup>

Efficient cause is not only always present action, but it is also always some concrete individual in the present. It is this man or that meteor, this bullet or that blast of wind, etc. Nature is pluralistic. We are quite unable, Lamprecht says, to lump these many agencies together as one cosmic mass of causality and call it the past as the determinists try to do. What the meteor does is not what the drop of acid does. What the power saw, as agent, does to the tree, as material before it, is not what the tree, as agent, does to the power saw, as its material. The same things play two distinct roles. It is both agent and patient. These same individuals cannot be handled in the same fashion and summed up in the same formulae, when interpreted in the light of their two different roles. Nature viewed as so much matter, Lamprecht says, is viewed collectively but nature viewed as efficacy requires that you view it distributively because each agency is a distinct individual.<sup>70</sup>

It is only when we understand the nature of efficient cause that we can see and explain the contingency in

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 106. *aphysics of Naturalism*

nature's process. This contingency is present in all change. The determinists because they deny the existence of contingency in nature cannot, argues Lamprecht, do justice to the true nature of change. Change is not only succession but also recession. Change is transformation. In and through change, something proves to be gone and something else proves to have come about. Change is passage from potentiality to actuality. What is potential in the patient becomes actual through the action of an agent. The shift from potential to actual does two things simultaneously to any material. First, it makes what initially was actual in that material a part of the past. Second, it turns what initially was only potential in that material into an actuality. Since potentialities are plural and the occurrence of any particular efficient cause is contingent, the future is indeterminate.<sup>71</sup>

When Lamprecht says the future is indeterminate, he does not mean that it can be anything whatsoever.

The future, when it becomes a present, will be exactly what it determinately is: its actuality will be its actuality and its potentialities will be its potentialities, and both its actuality and its potentialities will be specific and none other than what they really are. But the future, while still

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<sup>71</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, p. 152.

future, is indeterminate or is in the making. The future will be continuous with the present, limited to the range of potentialities of the present, but not inevitably any one of these plural potentialities, rather than any other of them.<sup>72</sup>

We live, Lamprecht says, in "an open universe" where subject-matter with diverse potentialities change in this way or in that way according to the manner in which some agents treat them. These agents are the efficient causes overlooked by the determinists.<sup>73</sup>

It is true that determinists often claim to have taken contingency into account. They grant that nature as a whole is contingent. It is not necessary, the determinists argue, that nature as we know it exist at all. Once given the nature we do have, however, then everything is determined.

We could of course, if we knew enough natural history, explain why this particular lunar arrangement now exists. But that explanation would be in terms of some prior existences, which would in turn be explained in terms of some still prior existences, and so on without end. Hence existence as a whole has to be regarded as contingent. We can imagine a nature different from what it is. But imagination is not factual determination. While everything in nature is

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 148-149.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 149. *Metaphysics of Naturalism*, p. 125.

necessary, nature as a whole is contingent. It is what it is, and that is an end to discussion.<sup>74</sup>

Lamprecht claims that the ultimate contingency that the determinists grant is far from an accurate account of contingency. The determinists concede, says Lamprecht, a kind of contingency which indeed philosophers of all schools might well grant except those rationalists who desire to deduce existence from first principles. They acknowledge contingency of nature collectively but assert that necessity holds for each and every act. They have failed, he says, to recognize and account for the genuine contingency in nature.<sup>75</sup> Lamprecht says that necessity and contingency ought to be affirmed to exist in each and every event. For Lamprecht, the initiation of each action is contingent while what follows is necessary and will take a particular path unless there is another intrusion of a new contingent agent which will causally alter the course of events again.<sup>76</sup> In addition every situation contains negative contingency which is the possibility of positive intrusion by one or more agents, and every situation contains potentiality due to the varied capacities of the

<sup>74</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, p. 112.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>76</sup> Lamprecht, The Metaphysics of Naturalism, p. 125.

patients.<sup>77</sup>

In summary, Lamprecht holds that a true account of the world cannot possibly be given in terms of causality or contingency alone. Nature is not one vast machine, he says, that "...so operates as to bring about inevitably only that which was from the beginning implicit in its structure."<sup>78</sup> Contingency is a term that has more than psychological import; it has metaphysical import. It means more than "...the uncertainty people feel who wish to know something in nature but are still largely ignorant and unable to remedy their ignorance."<sup>79</sup> Contingency, for Lamprecht, is a basic trait of nature which means that it is a characteristic of each and every event.

On the other hand, nature is not a chaos of elements that have no causal bearing upon one another. Nature has an abundance of relatively stable organized "objects" which makes possible the progress of science and the successful planning of our daily lives. Nature, Lamprecht argues, offers us evidence "...both of causal forces which (unless they are arrested) operate undeviatingly to inevitable effects, and also of contingent intrusion of new

<sup>77</sup> Lamprecht, Contingency in Nature, p. 16.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

factors into otherwise settled situations.<sup>80</sup> The crucial point in Lamprecht's account is that contingency is never a suspension or a violation of causal laws. It is rather the intersection of independent "causally continuous sequences," once put together by their intersection, operate in accord with a different causal pattern from that which either of the sequences alone would have exhibited. Causal necessity, he concludes, is just insufficient as an account of the full complexity of nature. The determinists, Lamprecht claims, fail to distinguish causal laws from causal agents, thereby featuring the "necessity" of the former and ignoring the "contingency" of the latter.

## 3.

Man has some measure of freedom of action, Lamprecht holds, precisely because nature has a measure of genuine contingency. He has decided to solve the ageless battle between man's apparent freedom with nature's apparent determinism by denying that nature is indeed wholly determined. Lamprecht grants that there is causality in nature and in man's actions and thoughts but insists that this does not imply that there is no contingency in nature

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 20. *Nature and History*, pp. 93-94.

and freedom in human action.<sup>81</sup> We have seen his argument  
 human action which eventuates from reflective judgment  
 for contingency in nature. Now we will look at his case  
 concerning a good to be sought.<sup>82</sup> Not all human act  
 for human freedom.  
 and

For Lamprecht, contingency is a metaphysical principle. The presence of any agent at just that moment in the course of events is contingent or accidental. If the agent is non-rational (such as a blast of wind or a ray of sunshine), then its conjunction with its subject-matter at just that time and place is a matter of chance. There is contingency here but no freedom. Non-rational things are not capable of free action, says Lamprecht. Stones, plants, etc. react only to the actuality that forces itself upon them with insistent pressure. On the other hand, if the agent is rational, then there is the possibility of choice because of the agent's rational powers and the different potentialities of the subject-matter. There is the possibility of freedom. Freedom, for Lamprecht, is the exploitation by rational agents of the contingency in nature; it is the pursuit of ends chosen among the potentialities of available subject-matter for action.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, Chapter IV; The Metaphysics of Naturalism, Chapter II.

<sup>82</sup> Lamprecht, Nature and History, pp. 93-94.

Choice, Lamprecht says, "...is that commitment in human action which eventuates from reflective judgment concerning a good to be sought."<sup>83</sup> Not all human actions and not even, he says, all voluntary actions are choices. Man acts often from impulses (external and internal) and usually thoughtlessly. An act of choice, for Lamprecht, "...arises in and through our efforts, reasonably, to determine an end we deem good and shall for that very consideration pursue."<sup>84</sup> Freedom, for Lamprecht, is action done with a moral purpose. These acts, he says, qualify all non-rational phases of living (impulse, desire, and emotion, etc.) by making a judgment of a good to the attainment of which every one of these non-rational parts of our being ought to be subordinated.

It is to act organically, so to speak - to act, not from the impelling force of the psychological drives which, prior to such judgment, may have been leading us in a certain direction, but from a purpose which may possibly commit us more resolutely to more in that direction but more probably commits us to a different course.<sup>85</sup>

Lamprecht does not believe that freedom is the substitution of reason for the non-rational phases of our being.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

He does not conceive of reason as a separate phase of our being because Lamprecht realizes that "reason qua reason," even if it existed, would probably be effete and impotent yet he does believe that man by using his rational powers can reorganize all phases of his nature. This reorganization, Lamprecht adds, ensues "...only if and when we understand what we ourselves are, what the natural situation is we confront, and what good may come from our interaction with that situation."<sup>86</sup> It is action, he says, that is done with an understanding of the meaning that act has for the future. So to act is to choose. So to choose is to be free.

Lamprecht does not doubt that many of man's so called decisions are the result of unconscious bias in human thinking. But human agents, he insists, are not always driven automatically in the direction of the psychologically strongest impulse. He believes that to regard all judgments as the necessary outcome of a mechanistic balance among a complex of psychological forces would, if correctly maintained, invalidate even the judgment that such is the case. Lamprecht contends that objectivity of judgment is possible about what is really good.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

There is a difference between, on the one hand, believing that a thing is good because, after temporary suspension of action, that thing is what one most strongly desires, and, on the other hand, disciplining any and all impulses and desires by reflective decision concerning what end or ends are really good. Or, to put the point in other words, there is a difference between, on the one hand, believing that something is good because one is driven by non-rational forces so to believe, and on the other hand, making a choice because one's objective judgment as to what is good makes that decision incumbent upon one.<sup>87</sup>

Lamprecht does not mean that man has total freedom. Even the most intelligent man is powerless to change the course of many events in the world about him. He cannot fully comprehend the situation that is before him and he cannot mold all the many conflicting emotional forces within himself into one all embracing pattern of final oneness. Man's freedom is limited but that does not mean that man has no freedom. The physical, social and psychological forces that to a great degree restrict man's freedom only tell part of the story. The presence of contingency in nature, Lamprecht argues, requires us to state that, "...to a degree and in a fashion, a man chooses deliberately rather than moves about in the blind

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

manner of inanimate agents.<sup>88</sup> Man is not restricted to the materials that immediately confront him because he can often find other materials that better suit his purpose elsewhere. In addition man reacts to natural materials in the light of their potentialities as well as their surface actualities. Man's exploitation of nature's contingency turns blind chance into purposefulness, and human choice does genuinely at times occur.

~~determin~~ ...as is one type of existential occurrence among many, many other kinds, so ~~contingen~~ human choice is one type of natural ~~sense of~~ contingency among many, many other kinds. All human choices are instances of natural contingency though most ~~the determ~~ instances of natural contingency are ~~Lamprecht's~~ not choices at all.<sup>89</sup>

~~case for~~ ~~Lamprecht's~~ ~~in human~~ ~~is~~

~~terribly inadequate.~~

Lamprecht's arguments against the determinists are insufficient. He fails to establish that there is contingency in nature in either of his two senses. He hoped to demonstrate to all naturalists that the section of causal patterns is accidental by showing that the only determinist argument which would contradict this position rests on the existence of a supernatural being with

<sup>88</sup> Lamprecht, Contingency in Nature, p. 25.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

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## nature CHAPTER IV

### CRITICISMS OF LAMPRECHT'S POSITION

As I mentioned earlier in my introduction to Part Two, I will critically examine Lamprecht's claim that there is contingency in nature and freedom in human action. I will show that his arguments fail to rebut the determinists and establish the existence of his sense of contingency in nature. I will try to salvage Lamprecht's sense of contingency by offering my own arguments against the determinists. It will also be shown that Lamprecht's case for the existence of freedom in human action is terribly inadequate.

#### 1.

Lamprecht's arguments against the determinists are insufficient. He fails to establish that there is contingency in nature in either of his two senses. Lamprecht hoped to demonstrate to all naturalists that the intersection of causal patterns is accidental by showing that the only determinist argument which would contradict this notion rests on the existence of a supernatural being with omnipotent power; a view which does not and cannot have any empirical evidence to support it. This argument is

false and the introduction of a supernatural being is irrelevant. A naturalistic determinism does not have to assume such an existence. They claim that the present is caused by the past. The way A behaves at  $t_1$  is a product of the way B behaved at  $t_2$  which is a product of the way C behaved at  $t_3$ , ad-infinitum. There is no need to posit a supernatural being since the necessity resides in the particulars of nature. The particulars and their powers produce the next stage of nature's process. ~~ever~~

Lamprecht's whole argument has a logical flaw. He begins his case by assuming that there are independent causal patterns and then tries to find the reason why they come together. He concludes that only a supernatural being could have the power to bring these independent events together since there is nothing in the events themselves (nothing in nature) that could bring them together. This makes perfect sense except that Lamprecht starts out with his answer. He starts out with this ontological assumption. Although a supernatural being is really irrelevant to the issue, Lamprecht's assumption that there are independent causally continuous sequences makes it seem to him that a supernatural being is crucial. Lamprecht does not establish, by this argument, that there is nothing in nature that can make accidental togetherness determined. In fact, he has not yet established that there are ~~Lamprecht's~~

"accidents" in nature at all.

Lamprecht's other argument about the determinist's ignorance of efficient cause seems correct. Efficient cause is present action by some specific individual. The present is metaphysically privileged. The past does not cause anything. Only present agents acting on present patients produce change. The agent does make what was potential in the patient actual. Even though Lamprecht's analysis of efficient cause is correct, however, he does not establish, with this argument, that there is contingency in nature. The efficient cause, contrary to Lamprecht's claim, is a source of necessity. The powers of the agent cause certain effects to follow. Lamprecht does not try to demonstrate that there is a sense of contingency in the powers of the agent. He wants only to demonstrate that the occurrence of any particular efficient cause is contingent. Lamprecht fails to establish this point in all his arguments.

Lamprecht's second sense of contingency becomes nonexistent with his failure to establish the accidental quality of events. It makes no difference if a particular patient has many capacities if it is necessary that a particular agent be at a given place and time since it is determined what that agent will do by what has already occurred. Here, I would like to point out that Lamprecht's

distinction between agent and patient is misleading when talking about contingency. He has pointed out that a particular acts both as a patient and an agent all the time but it must be stressed that agents and patients are just different roles played by the same particulars. It makes no sense to emphasize the behavior of the agents as if our world consisted of agents moving among waiting patients with varied potentialities. We have a flow of particulars and if the determinists are correct we cannot legitimately speak of potential in the patients of the given situation since they are the very particulars that have been determined already. We can only say that a particular has the potential to behave in different ways in different situations with different agents but the way it behaves in a given situation is already determined. Copper has the potential to be drawn out, to melt, to conduct electricity, to expand. Once copper occurs in an actual situation one or more of these potentials can or will be actualized. It all depends on what other particulars are also in that situation. The point that the determinists make, which Lamprecht's arguments do not defeat, is that the occurrence of just those particulars at that time and place is already determined. So, copper has no real potential in that actual event. It does Lamprecht no good to appeal to our experience as proof or

evidence for contingency in nature. The determinist's response is that we are merely ignorant of the factors at work that have produced a particular effect. Lamprecht fails to rebut the determinist position that there is no contingency in nature.

Although Lamprecht does not defeat the determinist argument, I feel there are various views of contingency open to one who holds the sense of causal necessity we introduced earlier. In addition to presenting these senses of contingency, I will try to salvage certain parts of the position defended by Lamprecht.

It is certainly possible for nature to change its course - at least in one sense of this ambiguous phrase. This Humean insight discussed earlier provides us with a legitimate sense of contingency which Lamprecht never considers. There is nothing self-contradictory about the notion of a change in the nature of either an ordinary P or a fundamental P. There are basically two different ways that the nature of a P might be altered. First it might change in a way such that its identity is not questioned because this change takes place in a theoretical structure which explains it. Yeast may lose its effectiveness over a period of time, litmus paper will not retain its capacity to turn red in an acid base forever, and a person forgets many skills learned early in life; yet the

yeast, litmus paper and person do not thereby lose their identities because there are certain basic P's which do not change whose nature explains these changes. Yet it is logically possible for such ordinary P's to change into some other P with an entirely different set of powers and capacities and new nature that explains them. These changes would be examples of contingency in nature. It is contingent that P continue to have certain powers and capacities.

The second way that nature might alter its course is in a much more fundamental way. There may be a change in the nature of the basic P's. There is nothing self-contradictory about the notion of a change in their natures since no actual or possible frames of references entail the falsity of each other. Though there is a necessity corresponding to the nature of the actual, this necessity does not imply that the actual is itself necessary in the sense that its denial is self-contradictory. Though some things happen of necessity within S, it simply happens to be the case that S rather than some other logical alternative in fact constitutes the nature of our universe. Nature itself is contingent.

Although the above examples are legitimate senses of contingency, it is obvious that when we say there is unconditionally  
necessity. For example, if an

contingency in nature that we mean more than either of the above cases. Lamprecht's two senses of contingency correspond closer to what we mean by contingency in nature. I will try to salvage his view by attacking certain assumptions of the determinist position that are not evidently true. The goal of my arguments is to make Lamprecht's view more tenable than the determinist thesis.

The determinists believe that if a man could see where everything in nature was at a given time and he was equipped with the laws of behavior of all those particulars then he could predict exactly what would happen from then on. They think that it is only out of ignorance that we believe there is contingency in nature.

To begin with, it is quite obvious that no man could ever be in that position. The determinist position is one that can never hope to be verified. This is one objection against their view, but it does not follow from this that the determinist position is false. The objection only makes clear the magnitude of their claim.

In the second place the determinist seems to lack any understanding about the nature of a scientific law. Physical scientists attempt to explain and predict what will happen under certain conditions. A law says if A is the case B will be the case. It never attempts to say unconditionally that A will happen. For example, if an

object with mass  $m_1$  comes  $d$  distance from an object with a mass of  $m_2$  a certain attractive force  $F$  will result between the two of them. The law never says an object with mass  $m_1$  will actually cross an object with mass  $m_2$  at distance  $d$ .

In addition, the antecedent of a given "if, then" statement is never all of nature. Here, Lamprecht's point about the individual nature of a cause is very relevant. He has pointed out in his argument with the determinists that a cause is never a mass of nature. The antecedent is always some limited part of nature and it is readily acknowledged by scientists that some other factor may break into that limited system and alter the expected outcome.

The determinist distorts not only our experience but he also distorts the meaning of our words. The "past" doesn't "produce" the "present." At least not in the way that they believe it to do so. The "past" is not simply nature at a previous stage in time because nature cannot be described that way. Nature is a complex flow of particulars that cannot be stopped at  $t_1$  and described as a whole. The entire idea seems to imply that nature itself is a closed system or a machine stretched out in linear fashion. There is absolutely no reason to believe

that nature is a closed system with a beginning or an end or any boundaries at all. There is no reason to mention the limits of the human mind as if nature could be grasped in the way the determinists describe even if there were a mind powerful enough. In conclusion there does not seem to be adequate evidence to support the view that everything is so related to make the future absolutely determined. Lamprecht's view seems much more tenable and corresponds more fully with our experience. There is a lack of causal agency in the intersection of causally continuous sequences. It is this accidental quality of events that allows the many capacities of the patient to represent a real contingency in nature.

## 2.

Lamprecht bases his case for freedom in human action on two facts; man has reason, and there is contingency in nature. He hoped to avoid the dilemma of explaining the existence of human freedom in a completely determined world by proving that there is contingency in nature. Lamprecht incorrectly assumes that the problem of human freedom is solved once the existence of contingency is established. The existence of human freedom does not follow from the fact that there is contingency in nature. It seems to me that contingency in nature may be a necessity in nature, as presented by Lamprecht, is not enough to

sary but not sufficient condition for the presence of genuine human freedom in action. The fact that man's intersection with other natural objects is accidental certainly does not establish that man is free. The quality of being accidental does not provide any foundation for freedom. Lamprecht's second sense of contingency does not get us any further. The mere presence of potential in the material before man is not sufficient to establish that man is free. It does make choice possible but in no way does this contingency make choice an actuality. One must still show that man is free to act on these different possibilities (alternatives).

Lamprecht's claim that it is man's reason that allows him to take advantage of the contingency in nature does not provide the solution to the problem. The existence of reason in man is not enough to guarantee genuine choices. Reason itself could be determined such that the exercise of it only gave the appearance of choice. Lamprecht himself makes the point that reason is not separated from the inner workings of man yet he never analyzes the nature of that relationship. The use of reason could be determined by the desires and wishes of man. There are many philosophers that take just such a position. The point is that the presence of reason in man and contingency in nature, as presented by Lamprecht, is not enough to

establish the existence of freedom in human actions. The analysis of freedom in man is much more complex than Lamprecht realized. It is absolutely crucial for this problem that our analysis of freedom measure up to the complexity of the issue.

Lamprecht seems to make his own vocabulary when it comes to discussing human freedom. It is not becoming for a philosopher who emphasizes common sense usage and experience to go so far astray. "A voluntary action" is more than an action not done under external compulsion. It usually means an action not done under any compulsion at all. In addition, there is no reason to tie the concept of freedom exclusively to moral activity as he does. Moral activity may indeed be the highest example of human freedom but it is in no way the only time man is considered to act freely, if indeed he ever acts freely at all.

The determinist position may not be very tenable, but Lamprecht's arguments are merely literary speeches about the ethical possibilities for man. Most of us accept that to a degree man has a certain amount of freedom. The determinist demands a certain type of proof that can never be given. They demand that we prove beyond any doubt that man is free. Yet, it is apparent that they never have to prove their case in the same way. Somehow the burden of proof has fallen on the shoulders of philo-

sophers who advocate that man is free. We are asked to doubt our experience. This seems completely out of order to me. It makes more sense to ask of the determinists why in fact he feels the need to believe he is determined. Certainly the empirical evidence does not convince us that we are determined. The real issue it seems is to correctly analyze the nature of human freedom. This account must also include an analysis of the role causality plays in human action. It is very apparent that Lamprecht's analysis does not do justice to the nature of human freedom. He does not give any account of how reason "conquers" the irrational side of man. He does not analyze the relation between ideas, desires, wishes and actions. We turn to an analysis of some of these relevant problems in our last chapter.

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## CHAPTER V

### FREEDOM REEXAMINED

This chapter will be a rudimentary attempt to advance the discussion of the problem of freedom beyond the limits of Lamprecht's analysis, though the context of the problem and the style of discussing it follows his lead. We will examine the relationship between actions and thoughts, and thoughts and feelings, in order to determine the exact nature of a free act and a free choice. My position is that no act is free unless it follows from a free choice and a free choice is a decision based on reasoned-feelings about some goal. The effects of external forces will be studied to see when, if ever, man acts freely in his environment. By doing this, I hope to establish that freedom does not mean action without limits. Finally I try to show that the efficient-cause model is not adequate for describing human behavior and that the concept of "motive" must be added to any model that purports to analyze human behavior.

It will be useful for our discussion to make clear

the nature of that "freedom" we are concerned with in this chapter. Freedom is a term with many meanings and uses. "More freedom" is a slogan that has a very long and complicated history. We are interested in the kind of freedom that involves a person's ability to make decisions and then to carry these decisions out in actions. We want to know how and when, if ever, a person can be said to really "direct" his own life style. *as certain nature*

We all know that there are very powerful external forces (natural, economic, social and political) that limit the real possibilities of men's actions. A man cannot fly by merely moving his arms. A man without money cannot purchase food for his family. Many people in this country do not qualify for jobs because they have either received no education or a very inadequate one. There are people who live in dictatorships where they cannot move about as they please because the laws of the land are very oppressive. These restrictions are real and many of us wish we could "break free" of them. In fact, history is filled with man's attempts (some of which were unsuccessful) to overcome external restrictions of all kinds. I hope to show that the existence of these external forces, which do limit man's actions, does not mean that man does not and cannot act freely at times.

*Although it is quite obvious that*

There are essentially three types of external restrictions. First, there are those external restrictions which we cannot overcome because we lack, and probably always will lack, the ability or power to do so. We cannot stop eating and drinking for three months and still live. We cannot merely move our arms and fly and we cannot walk through walls, etc. In other words, man, because he is a certain type of animal, has certain natural restrictions which it does not seem likely he will ever overcome. Second, there are those external restrictions which we cannot overcome at the moment though it is possible in the future that we will have the power to overcome them. The immigrant studies to become a citizen so that one day he can vote. The poor man learns a trade so that he can earn the money to purchase food for his family. The small child waits for the day that his muscles develop so that he can leap over the bush in front of his house. The third type of restriction is that which at the moment we have the ability to overcome but "for some reason" may not do so. We all have the power to go through a red light but we do not often, perhaps never, do so. There are many laws, codes and commands that restrict us even though we have the ability (physical or mental) to do otherwise.

Although it is quite obvious that our power to do

things, though substantial, has limits, this does not mean that man cannot act freely. In order for man to be free or to act freely, it is not necessary that man have the ability or power to do everything. Man's capacity for freedom must be discussed in light of the fact that man is what he is. It would be absurd to say that man cannot act freely because he does not have the power to walk through walls. The criteria used to determine if an act is free must be one that applies to man, not to gods. In other words those kinds of external restrictions which involve natural limitations have no bearing on the problem of freedom. The job is to find out what acts, among the things man can and does do, qualify as free acts. In fact, I hold that external restrictions in general can only have an affect on the problem of freedom if it can be shown that man's actions are completely conditioned by external forces such that all his actions invoke no real choice. The latter statement will be shown to be false later in this chapter.

I believe that a man can act freely, at times, regardless of the external restrictions imposed upon him while at other times a man may not act freely even though there are no external restrictions facing him. That is not to say that there is no relationship between freedom and

restrictions. The greater the restrictions, the fewer opportunities there are for free acts but at no point can the restrictions on a man be so great that there is no possibility for him to act freely.

My position is that freedom is not a quality that one has or does not have. You cannot give a man freedom but you can give him more opportunities to act freely. It may seem correct to say that to let a man out of jail or out of bondage is "to give him his freedom" but in actuality you have "only" given him greater opportunity to act freely. (Though this, of course, is important). One can neither make another man act freely nor give him freedom. This chapter will essentially be concerned with the nature of a free act and not with the opportunities for freedom. I wish only to say here that the problem of opportunities for freedom is one of the most crucial issues facing any man, family, or country.

## 2.

In any analysis of freedom, one must discuss the relationship between thought and action. Some philosophers have argued that man is only free in his thoughts because the model of causal necessity does not hold for thoughts. Even if this is true, others have argued that man cannot be considered free unless he has the power to act freely. Then, there are those philosophers who argue that both

man's thoughts and actions are "caused" by environmental and heredity factors such that each thought and action is the necessary result of the past.

My position is that there are free acts and free thoughts but that no action can be considered free unless it follows from a "free thought." The notion of a "free thought" will be discussed in greater detail later. Let it suffice to say here that a "free thought" is a decision to act in such and such a way because it is believed such an action will help to actualize a goal that was "freely chosen." I believe that no action can be judged as free or not free solely on the basis of external criteria. We often judge acts, even acts involving morality, according to their empirical consequences on the basis of some standard (moral, legal, etc.) but they provide no "freedom standard." Perhaps this is why many philosophers have rejected the notion of a free act in any way which is really meaningful. Any action can be free; it all depends on whether or not it was "freely chosen." A man may obey a traffic light or he may "run through" the red light--both acts may be free--or perhaps neither act was free. There are ways of judging whether an act was freely chosen or not (we will examine the concept of "free choice" in the next section,) but there is no way to judge the "freeness" of an action by just looking at

it. Freedom cannot be understood or found by an observer that refuses to examine the internal (thinking) side of man.

We can and do judge people, families and countries empirically for their tolerance for free acts. A country which allows all forms of religions to be practiced displays an atmosphere that is open to men acting freely on their religious beliefs while a family which insists that all the male members become doctors is a family that limits the possibility of acting freely in the vocational area. These things we can usually judge by looking at the external behavior of the people involved, although oppression can often be very subtle.

There is no doubt that the concept of power is crucial in a discussion of freedom of action and I wish to examine its relation to free acts now. Power is the key to freedom, many people have argued. The greater the power an individual has the more likely that he will be able to actualize his choices. This leads to the common notion that the more power an individual has the more free that individual is. It seems obvious that a man who has money is free to travel wherever he wants. A man with political power is free to violate certain laws while those people without power, because they lack the position or the money or the ability, are less free to do what they

choose to do. A poor man can choose to do many things but in fact does not have the power to do any of them. A crippled boy may choose to run but his legs do not have the power or ability to do so.

While it is true that power is needed to actualize free choices into free acts, power does not make an act free. Power is not the criteria by which we judge the "freeness" of an act. Men with great power may, in fact, never act freely while men of very limited power, when they act, may act freely.

There is no denying that a man with little power (political, economic, social, physical) is in a very real sense less free than a man with power. Choices and opportunities lose a great deal of their significance without power and ability to accompany them. There is little use, and perhaps some cruelty, in giving people opportunities for free acts (i.e. freedom to choose any job, freedom to travel, freedom to live any where, etc.) if we do not also assist them in developing the necessary ability (training) and giving them the required power (i.e. money) to take advantage of these opportunities. To tell a man that he is free to do what he wants is a cheap trick unless we provide him with the skills and education to make those opportunities a reality. While I do not deny that this

aspect of power is important, I do believe that the notion of a free act is in a very important way divorced from these issues of power.

A free act is an act that follows a "free" choice made among alternatives. Every man is faced with genuine alternatives every day of his life. By "genuine alternatives," I mean alternatives where there exists a real conflict of feelings for the different courses of action and there exists a real possibility that these different courses of action can be actualized by the man examining them. A man might have to decide whether he will continue school while his wife works and supports the family or whether he will quit school now and take a decent paying job so that his wife and children can spend more time together and have more of the comforts he feels they are deprived of because he is in school. Each alternative has its positive and negative aspects and each alternative is within the man's power to do. Every man often has a choice, among different jobs, among different women, about who to have as a friend, whether to obey a law or not, whether to help someone in need or not to help, how to help, etc. Each time that a man is faced with genuine alternatives, there is the possibility that he will act freely. There is no doubt that many men don't act freely when faced with genuine alternatives and that a man does

not act freely all the time but I will show that men do act freely at times because they do make free choices. The point is that we all have the power to act on some limited scale and therefore all have the possibility of acting freely regardless of our external position. A man who is in jail has very little range of areas in which he can act freely, yet within that limited range there are possibilities for free action. A free act is one which moves a person in the direction of a freely chosen course of action. I do not wish to be misunderstood as saying that all is well in the world since we can all act freely, regardless of our external circumstances. My point is a philosophical and psychological one. The world is not well and one of the greatest ills is that there are not enough genuine opportunities for free action.

Although power is not the criteria by which we judge an act as free, power is related to freedom in another way that has not been discussed. A person who is free must have the "power" to attempt to actualize his choices. We have now moved the discussion from the conception of a free act to the nature of the "free man." A free man is not only one who chooses freely but also a man who has the power of character to attempt to actualize his choices. A "free man" is committed to act out his decisions. The

nature of commitment is crucial in a discussion of freedom. Contrary to common belief, free acts are not the result of whims that are easily changed. A free man acts with a direction and a purpose which reflect who he is. Sometimes a free act is one that a man must do because of who he has chosen to be. A man who chooses to be a father must act in a certain way at times but this does not mean that he is not acting freely. He chooses to support his family and therefore goes out and gets a job which will enable him to fulfill that obligation which he chose freely. Sometimes in order to act freely, one must develop skills that require discipline. Any athlete knows that he must work hard for his freedom to do creative things on the athletic field. Something has gone wrong in the person whose choices and actions are not congruent. He has lost the ability to act freely and thereby becomes a person who is not free.

choose

### 3.

It is necessary, of course, to examine the concept of "free choice" which, until now, we have been simply using. My position, as mentioned above, is that only acts that are the result of free choices can be considered free. In order to give an accurate analysis, I feel it is necessary to make clear the roles that the emotions and reason

play in the making of a free choice. There have been great conflicts between those who advocate that "free choice" is the result of a decision based on the objective use of reason and those who advocate that a free choice is one that is consistent with what you want (feel). I do not think reason and emotion can be considered separate and distinct when discussing choice such that free choice is the result of one or the other but not both. He

To say that a free choice is a decision that is consistent with what you want (feel) is a mistake and an oversimplification. There is no doubt that those who advocate such a position capture some of the truth when they stress the fact that a free choice must be consistent with what you want and not what certain external authorities or forces want. They are right when they assert that a free choice cannot be one which is "forced" upon you from the outside. Freedom to them is to act and choose as you please. We see this doctrine exemplified in the student movement that now challenges our educational system. Students are insisting that they be free to study what they want. Although there is a great deal of justice in their cause, their conception of freedom is a distortion. The sensitivity and encounter group movements also emphasize this definition of freedom. It is freedom without responsibility and without the restrictions of

"reason." Reason is seen as the enemy of free choice because it is believed to be in opposition to feelings. I believe this view of freedom was a response to the real absence of feeling in the choices and actions of many people. When people, especially children, live according to the desires and wishes of other people, there develops a split between thinking and emotions. The person buries his own emotions and lives exclusively with his head. He becomes a mechanical man bound by reasons that are devoid of feelings. Therefore, it seems only natural to some people that freedom is choosing and acting on what you feel and want.

There is no doubt that a free choice must be based on what you feel. It is obvious that a boy who decides to go to college solely because his mother says he ought to go is not making a free choice. Yet it is not enough to say that a free choice is based on what you feel because in any real choice situation there are genuine alternatives, each of which reflect a want, desire or emotion. A boy may want to go to college because he desires to study medicine but at the same time he desires to become a sailor and travel around the world or a man wants to play golf on Sunday but at the same time he would like to take his son to the zoo. Every decision where there is a possibility for free choice represents a conflict of

emotions. It is true that some decisions reflect a conflict between what you want and what somebody else wants. In cases like these it seems that freedom involves doing what you want because we do not consider a choice to be free if it is based on fear of bad consequences such as someone's disapproval. Yet, at any given moment, we want many different things, so it is not enough to say that a free choice is based on what you want or desire. We can say that no choice is free unless it reflects something you desire or want but it is also necessary to add that no decision is free if it is the result of an overpowering desire that is felt by the person as compelling.

Not only is it not enough to say that a free choice is one that is consistent with what you want (feel) but it is incorrect to view reason as the enemy of free choice. It is reason that turns the conflict between emotions, which might otherwise be merely a battle to determine which emotion in the moment is the strongest, into a choice situation with implications for the future and the possibility of freedom. No choice would be free if it just reflected that in the moment one desire was stronger than another. In fact if all men's choices were the result of such battles, we could not say that man chose freely at all. In fact we would say man was ruled by his passions. Free choice involves an understanding of the course of action

chosen which includes its consequences for the future and free choice involves a commitment by the person that he will try to actualize his choice.

Reason is the eyes which allows us to see who we are, what we are doing, and how we should do it. Man does have the capacity to overcome certain desires if he can understand the negative consequences which would result from acting out that desire. This ability is only possible in those individuals whose reason and understanding have not been split off from their feelings. By thinking about or understanding certain actions, feelings arise which are attached to those actions such that any decision is the result of that understanding and those feelings which are attached to that course of action. Reason makes free choice possible but, contrary to those who argue that free choice involves the objective use of reason, we see that reason must be accompanied by feelings. Reason without emotion is powerless and in addition may well be the sign of a sick personality. A person can think about a crime and even understand the consequences of the crime but not have any feelings attached to the action such that he will go ahead and commit the crime without the slightest feeling of guilt. The dulling of affective tone, the splitting off of reason and feeling, is recognized by psychiatrists as

the major source of neurotic behavior.<sup>90</sup> Free choices are not the result simply of the objective use of reason. Free choices may or may not be moral, but they always involve a goal and a direction accompanied by emotions and some degree of understanding.

"Man can choose freely." This does not mean that a man at any given time in his life can choose to do anything he thinks of. Just as there are limits to what man can do, there are limits to what he can choose. Man's choices are a reflection of who he is and what he has done. A man's family, education, social surroundings, heredity, etc. all have an influence on what he desires; therefore they all have an influence on what he chooses. But "influence" does not mean "determines." We shall see in the next section that man's choices are not "caused" in the same way as gravity causes a rock to fall. The fact that a man's choices have limits does not mean that he cannot choose freely. A free choice can be made among genuine alternatives regardless of the limits of those alternatives. The choice made is free in the sense that the man is not compelled, forced or caused to make one selection rather than another. In addition, I believe that each time a man

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<sup>90</sup> E. H. Madden, Philosophical Problems of Psychology (New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1962), p. 116.

acts on a free choice he increases the possibility that his next choice will have a wider range of alternatives because such action opens the door to new learning and understanding. Thus by acting, man--through his understanding--incorporates more of the world inside himself and makes it his own whereby he frees himself for more choices. Man also learns sometimes, that he made the wrong choice and hopefully next time will not make the same type of mistake. He may even find that such actions change, modify or enhance certain of his wishes, desires, etc. Actions, thoughts and feelings have a crucial relationship for the free man.

4.

Contrary to Lamprecht, I do not feel that the efficient cause model is the best one to establish the existence of freedom in human actions. In fact, the efficient cause model stands as one of the greatest obstacles to an understanding of human behavior that could allow for free action. Lamprecht's discussion was a good attempt to establish contingency in nature but it was completely inadequate to the task of proving that men act freely at times. The efficient cause model is fine for describing the behavior of inanimate objects where there is no consciousness involved but as a description of human behavior,

it is very inadequate. It is no great wonder that an analysis of human behavior that excludes thinking would not find freedom anywhere in human action. Free acts are a result of free choices. A rock does not choose to fall when dropped from a window; a billiard ball does not choose to roll in such and such a direction when struck by another billiard ball at a certain angle. There is also no doubt that human beings sometimes respond like inanimate objects. A man is crushed and swept along by an avalanche just as a house is but there are times when men act on their own accord in a direction that they have freely chosen because of a certain goal they have in mind.

Those philosophers and psychologists who try to apply the efficient cause model to man hope and believe that they can make psychology into a natural science like physics, biology, and chemistry. For them, consciousness and freedom are only obstacles to a "true" scientific understanding of man in basic terms (i.e. motion, matter etc.). Man's behavior is studied and understood only from an external frame of reference. This is made clear in the following quote by E. G. Boring.

I conceive of myself as supporting the main thesis of B. F. Skinner. Skinner deals with the properties of the empty organism. He ignores, by intelligent intention, the nervous system and all

the hypotheses, speculations and intervening variables with which the skins of most organisms are supposed by psychologists to be stuffed. The properties of an organism are for him and for me simply the ways in which stimulus and response are related, just as the properties of an electronic instrument are the ways in which the electric output is dependent upon the electric input.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to studying and describing man from an external frame of reference, these philosophers and psychologists hope to show that all of man's actions are caused by some feature of the environment. They want to demonstrate that man is determined because they somehow believe that it is the goal of science to prove that everything is caused. B. F. Skinner voices this "scientific tradition."

As science advances, it strips men of ~~self-cause~~, fancied achievements.... The crowning blow to the apparent sovereignty of man came with the shift of attention to external determiners of action. The social sciences and psychology reached this stage about the same time. Whenever some feature of the environment--past or present--is shown to have an effect upon human conduct, the fancied contribution of the individual himself is reduced. The program of a radical behaviorism left no originating control inside the skin.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> E. G. Boring, "Mind and Mechanism," American Journal of Psychology, Vol. 50, (1946), p. 177.

<sup>92</sup> B. F. Skinner, Verbal Behavior (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), pp. 458-459.

I cannot look upon man as an empty organism that merely responds to stimulus as if he were a rock. I do not deny that there are times when the model of efficient causality can be used to describe human behavior, i.e.--reflexes, neurotic behavior, physiological functions. True, the environment has an affect on how man behaves. No man grows up in a vacuum but this does not imply that man is a piece of clay molded by his environment into a determined shape. Man can also affect his world because he is an active intelligent force who sometimes acts with purpose.

Descriptions of man's behavior must include a discussion of goals. Modern philosophers refer to a motive-model of behavior while Aristotle called it a final-cause. William James said the following:

The pursuance of future ends and the choice of means for their attainment are thus the mark and criterion of the presence of mentality in a phenomenon. We all use this test to discriminate between an intelligent and a mechanical performance. We impute no mentality to sticks and stones, because they never seem to move for the sake of anything, but always when pushed, and then indifferently and with no sign of choice. So we unhesitatingly call them senseless. 93

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<sup>93</sup> W. James, The Principles of Psychology (New York: H. H. 1890), p. 5.

Man constantly acts for the sake of something. When these goals are freely chosen, man acts freely. Acting freely is never an arbitrary act because acting freely always means to act for some reason. Man can indeed be seen in both efficient-cause and final-cause terms at the same time. The hand that throws a rock can be explained by efficient-cause, but the target selected for that rock still demands a final-cause explanation.

Philosophers who argue for the efficient-cause model would like us to believe that we only act out of present desires which determine our so called goals and that all our desires are the result of past conditioning. This model intentionally ignores man's capacity to think about and understand goals such that this understanding elicits desires and feelings. As I have pointed out, reason does not act alone to move man but neither is desire alone the force that explains man's behavior. Man does choose his goals and by acting on these goals he opens up new possibilities for future choices and actions. All areas in which man behaves are ones in which he makes choices. For Carl Rogers, science is itself an exercise of choice by the behavior of certain men. He argues for the rejection of the efficient-cause model of behavior by psychologists. Rogers proposes that we select the following as a value.

Likely area  
94 C. R. Rogers, On Science  
MICHIGAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Man as a process of becoming; as a process of achieving worth and dignity through the development of his potentialities; The individual human being as a self-actualizing process, moving on to more challenging and enriching experiences; The process by which the individual creatively adopts to an ever new and changing world; The process by which knowledge transcends itself, as for example the theory of relativity transcended Newtonian physics, itself to be transcended in some future day by a new perception.<sup>94</sup>

This is a very passionate plea for men, especially scientists, to see themselves as free agents. He argues on the basis of pragmatism and idealism at the same time. My position is that man can act freely but one's own perception plays an important part in whether or not one does act freely. The evidence is abundant that man can act freely but belief in that reality is needed to actualize this potentiality. A man who believes he is free will attempt to act freely. He will see the world as a place to actualize certain freely chosen goals and plans. He will feel and know his responsibility as an agent. A man who sees himself as determined will not feel responsibility for himself and for the world. He will blame his parents or his past or his environment for his present condition. Most likely he will not try to change himself or the world and without belief in the possibility of change it is unlikely even if he attempted, that he would ever succeed.

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<sup>94</sup> C. R. Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966), pp. 395-396.

This I feel is a terrible lack both for the man and for the world.

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